THE HISPANIC-BLACK FEUD, BY LINDA CHAVEZ

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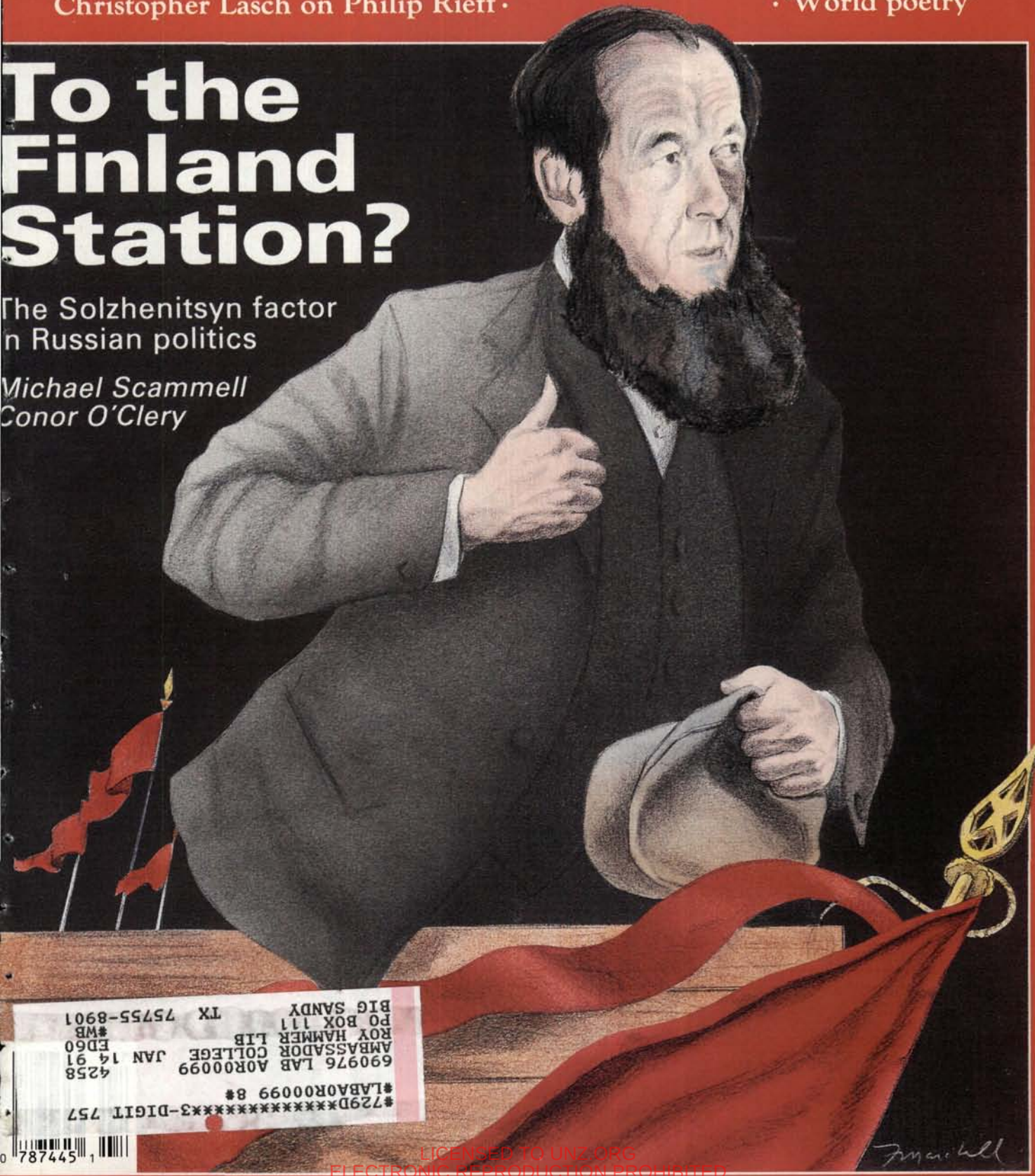
THE NEW REPUBLIC

Christopher Lasch on Philip Rieff ·

· 'World poetry'



To the Finland Station?

The Solzhenitsyn factor in Russian politics

Michael Scammell
Conor O'Clery

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CORRESPONDENCE

Western expansion

To the editors:

Larry McMurtry admits a bit too grudgingly in "How the West Was Won or Lost" (October 22) that there is real merit in the revisionists' position on the history of the West; there's ample room in the historical landscape for both the celebration and critique of the West and its development. And I would argue that if Patricia Nelson Limerick seems too strident, the revisionist historiography she represents serves to remind us that the real West had real problems and that those problems deserve to be investigated again and again. Though today's revisionists are not the first on the scene to raise critical questions (as McMurtry brusquely reminds us), they have much to say that is worth knowing. Surely even McMurtry would admit that theirs is a daunting, even thankless, role, for it is the mystique of the West that continues to charm us, not its failure.

What McMurtry reminds us is that the taking on of cultural icons, especially ones as emotion-laden as the American West, is a considerable task. Moreover, I do not think that the revisionists who make us uncomfortable do so out of anything less than a deep commitment to the knowing and understanding of the human costs of history. And if they "end up trampling the West of the imagination," then so be it. After all, Americans—who tend to be too smug about their history to begin with—are wonderfully immune to fact and wondrously attracted to a self-defined image of the past. As McMurtry's powerful family portrait photo from the 1940s shows us, the comfortable illusions of the West are a sorry substitute for reality.

CLYDE ELLIS
Greensboro, North Carolina

Buchanan fodder

To the editors:

Overkill alert! Has TNR, at this late date, joined in the accusation of anti-Semitism against Pat Buchanan ("Loose Buchanan," October 15) for the fun of piling on? Or is this a convenient opportunity to attempt to discredit one of the most skilled and effective conservative spokesmen in America?

This is not to suggest that some of Buchanan's comments on Jews weren't inflammatory. But we simply cannot fling the accusation of anti-Semitism at anyone who offends Jews—not in the wake of the Holocaust. To label someone an anti-Semite today implies that they are but a short step removed from genocide. There is no corresponding heritage to the term "anti-Catholic," and no reason wounded Catholics should be reticent to make the charge.

Buchanan's biggest crime is that he cannot resist the most pungent and occasionally noxious language to make a point. But I am confident that when he slips, TNR can find the words to upbraid him without enlisting the ghosts of Goebbels and Heydrich.

MONA CHAREN
Los Angeles, California

The editors reply:

The editorial said explicitly that Buchanan is not—repeat, not—like the Nazis. We said that he is merely an anti-Semitic post-Holocaust anti-anti-fascist, which is achievement enough.

Idle gossip

To the editors:

No one can insist that your book reviews be published on a timely basis or make any sense. But the hot-air-inflated article that pretends to be a review of *Walter Winchell: A Novel* by Michael Herr ("Confidence Games," November 5) is salted with inaccuracies. I'll cite only the ones relating to me.

In a single sentence your reviewer, Nicholas Lemann, writes that I'm "now a sleazy publisher, then editor of an anti-Winchell magazine." I haven't been a publisher—sleazy or otherwise—for two years, having sold my publishing house for $12 million. Its 2,500 titles ranged from Dalton Trumbo's *Johnny Got His Gun* to Ferdinand Lundberg's *The Rich & the Super-Rich* and included last year's second-largest-selling non-fiction title, *A Woman Named Jackie* by C. David Heymann. Plus dozens of "gossip celebrity" authors ranging from Albert Einstein to Fidel Castro.

As for my being "editor of an anti-Winchell magazine," he errs there too. I have never been the editor of *any* magazine. *Exposé* (later *The Independent*) was a tabloid newspaper. It published original articles by such authors as George Selds, Norman Mailer, William Faulkner, Ted O. Thackery, and Upton Sinclair. It published only one article on Winchell—but that was the one that toppled him.

LYLE STUART
Fort Lee, New Jersey

Nicholas Lemann replies:

The phrase from my review that Stuart

continued on page 41

THE EXPANDING CRIMINAL LAW

A Conference Sponsored by the Cato Institute's Center for Constitutional Studies
November 15, 1990
The Grand Hyatt Washington

The prosecution of Cincinnati's Contemporary Arts Center, the war on drugs, an emerging war on corporate America, the Department of Justice and the American Bar Association battling over whether prosecutors may seize defendants' assets–these and other recent events point inescapably to an expanding criminal law. As Congress debates a crime bill that provides for the death penalty for drug dealing and life imprisonment for "savings and loan kingpins," this Cato Institute conference will discuss the proper role and limits of the criminal law in a free society.

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Cover by Fred Marshall for THE NEW REPUBLIC. Articles on pages 18 and 22.

2 CORRESPONDENCE Revisiting the West, Buchanan, and Nixon, &c.

4 MICHAEL KINSLEY **TRB: CUI BONO** Who wins from the new oil crisis?

5 THE EDITORS **NOWHERE MAN** Can the Bush presidency get any more vacuous? **NOTEBOOK** The Reagan tapes, the Barry sentence, &c.

7 PETER MAASS **MOONSKIES** The Unification Church cashes in on Soviet decline.

10 FRED BARNES **WHITE HOUSE WATCH: QUOTA, UNQUOTA** How George Bush set out to sign the 1990 Civil Rights Bill, and flip-flopped his way to a veto.

11 JACOB WEISBERG **THE MEXICAN LUNCH** A sordid Beltway tale of influence-peddling, back-scratching, public relations, and the president of the United States.

13 STEVEN EMERSON **SPOOK KOOK** The only thing wrong with the recent best-selling book about Israeli intelligence is that the author's a phony.

14 LINDA CHAVEZ **RAINBOW COLLISION** The civil rights alliance between Hispanics and blacks, always fragile, is finally heading for the rocks.

18 MICHAEL SCAMMELL **TO THE FINLAND STATION?** Earlier this fall Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn broke his long silence about the turmoil in his native land. A report on the message, and its implications for the Soviet Union and for the author's political future.

22 CONOR O'CLERY **BACK IN THE USSR** The reaction of Solzhenitsyn's compatriots.

24 STANLEY KAUFFMANN **ON FILMS: TO THE MANOR BORN** Jeremy Irons is elegantly decadent as Claus von Bülow in Barbet Schroeder's *Reversal of Fortune*.

26 ROBERT BRUSTEIN **ON THEATER: THE AVANT-GARDE AND SHOCK ART** The latest in victim theater: animals unite in Martha Clarke's *Endangered Species*.

28 STEPHEN OWEN **WHAT IS WORLD POETRY?** Poets who write to be read in translation are a curious breed, as Bei Dao shows.

32 CHRISTOPHER LASCH **THE SAVING REMNANT** *The Feeling Intellect: Selected Writings* by Philip Rieff, edited with an introduction by Jonathan B. Imber

36 JONATHAN RIEDER **ADVENTURE CAPITALISM** *Getting Paid: Youth, Crime and Work in the Inner City* by Mercer L. Sullivan; *The Cocaine Kids* by Terry Williams; *Seductions of Crime* by Jack Katz

38 JOHN DRURY **POEM** *Burning The Flags*

42 HENDRIK HERTZBERG **PAKISTAN DIARIST: TEAM PLAYER** An election 'observed.'

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TRB FROM WASHINGTON

Cui bono

Texans are trying hard not to appear smug this time. They are not flaunting their renewed oil wealth, or sneering at people from less fortunate regions. It's partly superstition—they can't believe their luck—and partly hard-learned tact. After their obnoxious behavior the last go-round, they don't want to offend those who regard the Gulf crisis as no cause for celebration. A *Wall Street Journal* reporter sent out to hunt for evidence of unseemly gloating could find only one anonymous drilling company that had ordered champagne to celebrate Hussein's invasion of Kuwait. Texas is lying low.

Nevertheless, the figures are impressive. Texas pumped 716 million barrels of oil last year. The price bumps around a lot these days, but even without actual fighting it is roughly $15 a barrel higher than a year ago. That works out to a nice $10 billion infusion into the state economy. Texas's proven oil reserves as of 1988 were more than 7 billion barrels. By definition, that was oil that could be profitably pumped for the then-current price of about $13 a barrel. At $33 a barrel, that oil is worth $140 billion more. Not bad.

The numbers derive from one of my favorite well-thumbed volumes, the *Basic Petroleum Data Book*, published three times a year by the American Petroleum Institute. When it comes to dreams of avarice, "Dallas" and "Dynasty" have nothing on it. The latest oil crisis, like earlier ones, is redistributing wealth on a scale that trivializes all surrounding policy debates, such as our recent tiff over taxes and last spring's discussion about financial aid for the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

The world is extracting oil from the ground at a rate of about 21 billion barrels a year. (The petroleum people call it "production" but I prefer "extraction": after all, they didn't make the stuff.) A $15 price increase means a transfer of something over $300 billion a year from unlucky people to lucky ones. Total world reserves as of January 1 were slightly more than a trillion barrels. (Interestingly, proven reserves have increased steadily year after year. There is no growing oil shortage.) The recent price increase, if it holds, raises the value of those assets by almost three times the entire U.S. gross national product. The United States consumes more than 6 billion barrels of oil a year. Our "Gulf crisis surcharge," at $15 a barrel, approaches $100 billion a year, about half of which goes to domestic extractors and half of which goes to foreigners.

I do not mean to suggest that anyone actually relishes this crisis, let alone wants an all-out war. But the price of oil is now exquisitely sensitive to war fever. When Soviet aide Yevgeny Primakov met with Saddam Hussein at the end of October, the price dropped $2 a barrel. When nothing apparently came of it, the price rose $2. Two dollars a barrel represents $42 billion a year sloshing from somebody's pocket to somebody else's. Owners of oil would have to be superhuman not to have mixed feelings with that kind of money at stake.

Domestic oil extractors are wise to be discreet about their windfall. As in earlier crises, they have managed to compound their gain in Washington. The budget bill includes a variety of new tax breaks for oil and gas. Although they are supposedly intended to encourage increased exploration and drilling, these tax favors generally do not distinguish between truly new production and oil that is being pumped anyway. They are piously directed at "small" producers, as if the typical small oil producer really needed to worry where his next Mercedes was coming from. In fact, these new tax breaks mostly take the form of relief from the "alternative minimum tax," which (as last week's sermon explained) only hits very affluent people paying very little in taxes anyway.

Who else wins big from the new oil crisis? There have been the usual accusations of rip-off directed at the big oil companies. The charges are somewhat unfair. The companies have not been overcharging at the pump. It's true that pump prices took off quickly after August 2 and have not come down as crude oil prices moderated. But the pump price never reflected the full increase in crude prices. The big windfall is in extracting oil from the ground, not in refining it into gasoline. For ARCO, which extracts almost exactly as much oil as it refines, profits are way up. For Mobil, which refines more than twice as much oil as it extracts, profits are down. As of 1987, six American oil companies (BP America, Exxon, ARCO, Shell, Texaco, and Chevron) were "producing" more than half a million barrels a day. The oil price hike means more than $8 million a day in new revenue for them, without lifting a finger.

Another big winner is Saudi Arabia. The Saudis win twice: first, in higher prices for the oil they were already selling, and second, by selling an extra 2 million barrels a day as a service to the war effort. Last year's Saudi production was about 1.8 billion barrels. An extra $15 profit per barrel equals $27 billion a year. Two million new barrels a day at $33 a barrel is another $24 billion in revenue (less $1.95 or whatever pittance it costs to get the oil out of the ground out there). Total: more than $50 billion. This should temper our gratitude for the $12 billion the Saudis have offered to pay in support of American forces defending their relative freedom.

Possibly the most grateful winner is the world's biggest oil producer, the Soviet Union. The Soviets extract more than 4 billion barrels a year and export about a fifth of that. Until recently most Soviet exports have been to members of the Eastern bloc at essentially fictional prices. But that ends January 1, when the Soviet Union starts charging its former satellites world prices and demanding payment in hard currency. At $33 a barrel, a fifth of Soviet production would bring in something approaching $30 billion. The Soviet Union also exports huge quantities of natural gas, whose price will go up in tandem with oil. (Remember that gas pipeline to Western Europe we didn't want to let them build?)

Unfortunately, Soviet oil extraction is declining—not, as in the United States, because the wells are running dry, but because of incompetence and mechanical decay. But the Soviets still stand to do nicely—an unexpected gift at a time when they desperately need it, and perhaps even deserve it.

And the losers in the great oil wealth transfer? Eastern Europe, which was just steeling itself for the shock of paying $18 of hard currency for a barrel of oil, when it learned it would have to pay more than $30. The cost is in the billions per nation, making our aid offer of the odd $100 million here and there look even more irrelevant. The non-oil Third World loses big, as usual. And of course American consumers, who, though they lose the least from the highest base, can be counted upon to complain the loudest.

MICHAEL KINSLEY

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

NOVEMBER 19, 1990

NOWHERE MAN

"I'm just doing my job as president of the United States. I'm not preparing anybody for anything." —George Bush, as quoted in *The New York Times*, October 30

It is unfair—and perhaps even unwise—to expect of a president anything so grandiose as a vision. But it is not unreasonable to expect of a democratic government some modest articulation of goals and convictions, some statement of principles for which it is prepared to fight. Both the Carter and the Reagan administrations—for all their failures—were marked by some clarity of this sort. Whatever else can be said about them, they at least provided some criterion for support or opposition.

It is becoming clearer by the day that this cannot be said of the current administration. It is not even possible to use the word failure about it, because it is impossible to know what the administration would characterize as success. Does it, for example, desire the kind of low-taxing, low-spending federal government that was a feature of at least the rhetoric of its predecessor? And was the recent budget deal therefore a setback or an advance? Don't hold your breath for an answer. Does the administration have a view about the desired outcome of the present turmoil in the Soviet bloc? Or in the Middle East? Your guess is as good as ours.

This policy should not be dignified with the name of pragmatism. Pragmatists are flexible about means and clear about ends. They trim precisely to reach a destination by taking advantage of prevailing winds and currents. The administration does the opposite. Its policy *is* the winds and currents. Dogmatic about means, it is wildly flexible about ends. Its means are uniformly those of placation—or appeasement, to use a harsher word. This is true whether the appeased be George Mitchell, Newt Gingrich, American voters, Saddam Hussein, or Hafez Assad. More disturbingly, the administration's ends—so far as they can be said to exist at all—are whatever the appeased parties want. Even on those rare occasions when Mr. Bush seems to be taking a stand, such as his veto of the 1990 Civil Rights Act, he does it without any public, principled defense, and gives the impression that he is acting in a cynical attempt to placate a constituency.

What principle, for example, can be seen in the administration's conduct during the recent budget negotiations? It took more than a year for the administration to admit that the deficit was a problem, and eighteen months to swallow the need for tax increases. Yet at no point did Bush summon the integrity to

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present a budget that reflected his real priorities. At no point did he even articulate a broad economic philosophy by which to assess his objectives. His stubborn defense of a capital gains tax cut turned into a rearguard action against higher income tax rates, which in turn ceded to the desperate point that a deficit deal was necessary to allow the Fed to cut interest rates substantially. Partly because of its own confusion, the administration achieved none of these objectives. The final deal jettisoned the income tax rates bequeathed by Reagan, achieved no significant cut in entitlement spending, trimmed the deficit by a smaller amount than originally hoped, and is unlikely to lead to anything but marginal interest rate cuts. This, we are asked to believe, was success. We are tempted to ask what failure could be.

The policy in the Middle East, however, is perhaps the clearest example of the administration's principle-free politics. Its strategy until August 2 was the energetic appeasement of Saddam Hussein. When this policy began to fail—and the evidence had been growing for at least a year—the administration doggedly stuck to it. When the tactic crumpled with the invasion of Kuwait, no one in the administration even had the decency to repudiate it. No apologies were made. No resignations took place. The same people who managed the appeasement now preside over the military buildup. And the strange thing is, there was no hypocrisy in this. Mr. Bush and his colleagues avoided hypocrisy because they believed equally in both policies. Which is to say, they can believe in anything.

And what of the ends of our policy? Take your pick. In the first few days Mr. Bush went from ruling out intervention to stating that the invasion "will not stand." Since then the administration has hinted that it is prepared to rid the Middle East of the military threat of the Baghdad regime, yet has officially stuck to the U.N. line of mere Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait. To be sure, Mr. Bush deserves credit for rallying allies and other Arab nations against Iraqi aggression. But the danger is that this is all the administration feels it has to do. Multilateralism has become an end in itself. The actual objective is confused. The U.N. has stopped short at backing Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait. Our ally, Mikhail Gorbachev, has said, "It is unacceptable to have a military solution to this question." Does anyone doubt that if Hussein were to have the wit to offer our Arab allies a face-saving compromise without war, they would seize it? It may be that the administration has private assurances from its coalition partners or intends a military action to free Kuwait, which will necessarily involve an attack upon Iraq itself. But leaving its key war aim unclear until the heat of battle, when leading a fragile and fractious coalition, is a recipe for military and diplomatic disaster. At the moment Bush is leading a cohort of many to a destination he hasn't yet had the courage to identify.

That goes for the domestic coalition as well. Some level of secrecy about military options is necessary, of course. But Mr. Bush's reluctance to come clean on his potential war aims goes beyond secrecy into a curious refusal to engage in the persuasion that democratic politics demands. It is no wonder that the American people—and the American armed services—are increasingly disenchanted with the operation in the Gulf. We understand that asking George Bush to be Winston Churchill is a mite unrealistic. But the growing perception among Americans that the aim of a war is to keep down the price of oil, or to sustain the Pentagon budget, or to do the bidding of Israel, is the fault of a president who will not explicitly rally his fellow citizens to a possibly difficult and protracted conflict. And the reason he has not done so, we suspect, is not merely because of his cynicism about American democracy, which is profound, but because he will not know his own aim until circumstances force a random one upon him.

There are, of course, some advantages in having a man with no convictions in the White House—or anywhere else in the administration for that matter. By attempting to transform politics into management, able bureaucrats, in times of peace and prosperity, can rely upon the complacency of the electorate to survive relatively unscathed. If they're as lucky as George Bush, they can even bask in a transformation of world politics they did nothing to bring about. But this luck can only last so long. Neither peace nor prosperity exists in a vacuum. Both are the products of convictions acted upon, choices made, risks taken. Without making these choices or taking these risks, governments easily slide from peace and prosperity to the brink of recession and war. Which is where, not accidentally, we now find ourselves.

NOTEBOOK

SENATOR YES: This week's profile in courage is Minnesota Senator Rudy Boschwitz, who voted against the Civil Rights Bill, then voted to override President Bush's veto of it twenty-four hours later. Boschwitz credited his flip to a last-minute change of heart, brought on by seeing David Duke in the Senate gallery. Others speculated that the reason was a new poll that showed Boschwitz leading his Democratic challenger, Paul Wellstone, by only three points. Boschwitz hedged his bets even further by not casting his vote for override until it was clear that there were enough votes to sustain the White House veto. He had reportedly promised to side with the president if he was needed. Minnesota voters may shortly decide that he is not.

FORGET THE NIXON TAPES: One of the most depressing things about American publishing in recent years is the ease with which it has accommodated itself to the American impatience with books. Last week the

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abjection reached a new low. "Ronald Reagan is an American success story," says his publisher, Simon and Schuster, which is rushing *An American Life* to the stores. "Now in this dramatic and revealing book, Ronald Reagan recounts both his life and his beliefs with uncompromising candor and his familiar wit." Typical jacket copy, this; except that we quote not from the jacket of the book, but from the box containing the two tapes of the book, "read by the author," that have been released with the book, and sent to book reviewers. (Perhaps the tapes should have been sent to record reviewers, and the book along with *them*.) The *justesse*, though, is sublime. Of course Ronald Reagan's book would come on tape. His was the administration that broke new ground in the application of (let us say) the post-literate media to American politics. It's amazing there isn't a video.

A FEW SHORT SENTENCES: It wasn't long after Mayor Marion Barry was handed a six-month jail term that noises started being made in Washington about racial double standards in sentencing. This has a more rational basis than all the paranoid posturing about FBI plots to target black elected officials. Oliver North was convicted of a felony and received community service. Michael Deaver was convicted of a felony and got community service and a fine from Thomas Penfield Jackson, the same judge who sentenced Barry to jail for a misdemeanor drug possession charge. These are valid comparisons. The logical conclusion, though, is not that Barry should walk. It's that Deaver and North should not have been dealt with so lightly. Few judges relish sending non-violent, white-collar offenders to prison. But in the case of government officials convicted of violating the public trust, a stay in prison, however brief, seems appropriate. Barry's offense bears an obvious relation to the lethal violence that blights his city. In any event it may be as much as a year before Barry sees the inside of a cell. Meanwhile, he is still mayor, and is running as an independent for the D.C. City Council. His green campaign posters plastered around the city read: BARRY—COUNCIL AT LARGE. Perhaps they should say: BARRY—STILL AT LARGE.

TRIUMPH OF THE WILL:

Law students start drive for mandatory volunteerism

—*The Boston Globe*, October 22

(thanks to E. L. Pattollo, Cambridge, Massachusetts)

WHOOPS: On the November 12 Correspondence page, John Atlas was incorrectly identified as executive director of Citizens for Tax Justice. His real job is chairman of New Jersey Citizens Action. •

The Unification Church in Russia.

MOONSKIES

By Peter Maass

SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA

On a pleasant autumn day last year, a select group of journalists was quietly ushered into a comfortable home in an exclusive neighborhood here, treated to a generous dinner, and given a tour of the house, including the private quarters, which only the closest of the host's friends have seen. The evening was filled with cordiality. Nobody asked questions about the things that landed the controversial host in so much trouble during the 1970s and 1980s—right-wing extremism, murky business dealings, mass weddings, allegations of religious brainwashing and political influence-peddling, and imprisonment for tax evasion. There was a reason for the journalists' self-restraint: they were Soviets whose visit to South Korea was paid for by the Unification Church. But the interview was nevertheless noteworthy: it was the Rev. Sun Myung Moon's first in at least a decade.

Moon is coming in from the cold war to smother his old foes with kindness and joint ventures. He seems to be embracing the heirs of Marx and Mao with nearly the same degree of passion he once unleashed against them. A few months after the Seoul interview, Moon, 70, made his first visit to the Soviet Union and met in the Kremlin with President Mikhail Gorbachev. The plump South Korean predicts a "moral and economic renaissance" for the Soviet Union, and promises to support it. Investments by his business empire are expected soon, possibly in a computer school and a hotel. The Unification Church movement already has become a key foreign investor in China. Firms linked to the church are pouring about $250 million into a massive car factory in Huizhou, in southern China, and the church is looking for at least $750 million more from outside investors to finish the plant and build an industrial city and leisure resort at the site, about fifty miles from Hong Kong.

It wasn't long ago that Moon's shrill extremism and bizarre religious teachings were a source of some discomfort to conservatives. Bo Hi Pak, one of Moon's chief aides, once accused Democratic Representative Donald Fraser, who was investigating the Unification Church's alleged role in the Koreagate scandal (which involved payoffs by Park Tong Sun and other Koreans to members of Congress), of being "an enemy of [America] and all free nations" for hindering Moon's work and besmirching his reputation. In a recent interview at

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his Seoul office, Pak, now president of the church-controlled *Washington Times* newspaper, said calmly that the moment has come to "help the Soviets get out of the Communist system as quickly as possible so that they can join the world community of democracy."

Yet it's not just the rhetoric that's undergone changes as Moon and his stigmatized church try to enter the mainstream. The flower-sellers seeking a few dollars in airports are being replaced by businessmen putting together million-dollar deals in financial capitals. Reporters' questions are often answered rather than routinely ignored, though the church still refuses to talk about sensitive financial or religious activities. The church's money-losing foray into the U.S. print media is being overshadowed by quiet acquisitions in the cable television business.

The precise size of the global business controlled by Moon is unknown. The empire is not owned by Moon himself but by a web of Unification Church officials and members who funnel profits and investments to projects backed by Moon. Pak recently disclosed that a minimum of $100 million in profits and donations is annually put at Moon's disposal—and often the amount is much larger. The profits are the top of the business pyramid; the base is presumed to be enormous, though it reportedly rests on a foundation of debt.

An article by John B. Judis last year in *U.S. News & World Report* estimated that at least 335 companies worldwide are affiliated with the church, producing or selling a baffling array of goods: weapons, soft drinks, car parts, computers, machinery, clothing, and fish, to name a few. When Americans visit health food stores to buy Korean ginseng, chances are they will be purchasing herbal roots grown and marketed by Moon's Ilhwa firm. Japanese and American office workers might be using computers produced by Wacom, a Unification firm in Tokyo, which are sold under several Japanese brand names, including Mitsubishi. East Germany may be rebuilt in part with some heavy machinery produced by a Moon business in West Germany.

The Unification Church's unexpected push into the Soviet Union remains in its infancy, with goals being articulated more quickly than actual projects. Church officials say Moon wants to help establish 2,000 factories in the formerly evil empire, either through church firms or by aiding Soviet entrepreneurs. "We're trying to encourage capital investment and joint ventures that will keep the economy from going belly-up," says Larry Moffitt, executive director of the church's World Media Association. He said Moon is prepared to commit "tremendous resources" to the Soviet Union, though he would not say how much. In October Pak took to Moscow a delegation of businessmen from Japan, the United States, and South Korea interested in investing in the Soviet Union. Many of them are church members. While there, Pak handed Raisa Gorbachev a $100,000 check as a donation for a cultural foundation she heads.

Aside from the computer school and hotel project in Moscow, officials say that the church might also be interested in helping Soviet road construction to complete one of Moon's fantastic pet projects—an "international peace highway" across the world. It's unclear whether anything will happen soon. The chaos in Moscow makes it difficult for any investor, even an enthusiastic corps of Moonies, to strike deals.

The church also has begun a process of political cross-fertilization by sponsoring a trip to the United States by about 380 Soviet students and professors for lectures about America and religion. The seminars, held in July and August, were organized by the Collegiate Association for the Research of Principles (CARP), the right-wing student group founded by church members. "The Soviet Union is opening up, and there is a lot of junk coming in there—immorality and drugs," said Bjorn Ottosson, CARP's assistant director for the Soviet project. "We want the Soviets to see what has happened in America to prevent it from happening in the Soviet Union."

The financial stakes are highest in China. The Chinese car firm, Panda Motors Corporation, was negotiated and agreed on in the days before the Chinese government took a bloody turn in June 1989. Moon is now in the awkward position of dealing with a leadership that has shed its reformist political clothing while instituting an austerity program. The global car market has become more competitive than ever for established firms; an inexperienced odd couple like Moon's church and China's government faces an uphill battle. According to Pak, the car factory is to reach an annual output of 300,000 units for export by 1995. The vehicles will be called Pandas and reportedly will be based on the Chevrolet Chevette, for which Panda Motors has bought design and production equipment from General Motors.

Moon's resurrection is hardly a welcome event for his many critics, who have accused him of brainwashing America's children in an attempt to rule the world by establishing a right-wing corporate theocracy. Whatever his political motivations, his religion has hardly taken hold in his own homeland of South Korea, where his critics say membership is a humble 50,000. The membership roster in the United States appears to be even smaller than in South Korea. But the virgin territory in the Soviet Union and China is tempting for the church. And unlike other religions seeking to gain converts among the godless masses, the Unification Church can use its business empire to open many doors.

Talk of recruitment is quickly dampened by Pak. "Many people suspect that Reverend Moon has ulterior motives," he said. "I will absolutely deny that allegation." For now the religious goals and activities seem to be given a low profile; an aggressive recruitment program would draw attention to Moon's religious goals, upset the political leadership in China and the Soviet Union, and possibly scare investors away. Even so, the

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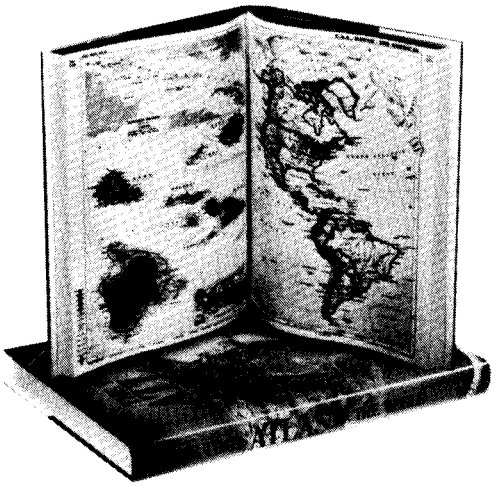

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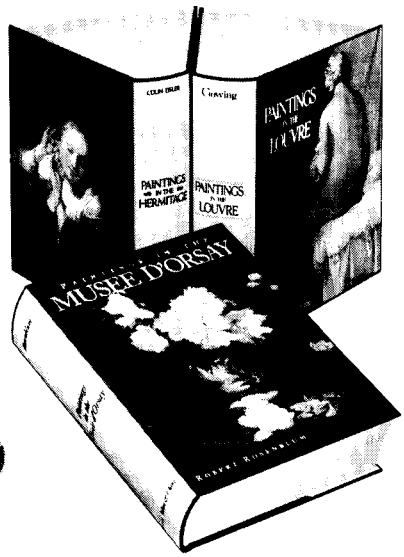

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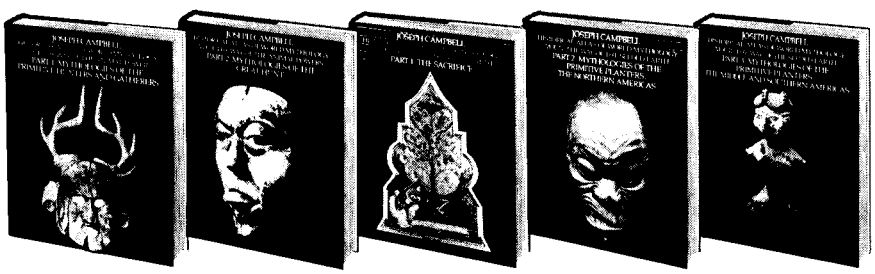

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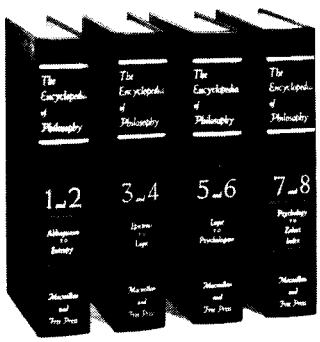

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church is not standing by idly as new evangelical frontiers open up. Several members said the church is organizing a quiet network of underground missionaries and believers in these countries. When Moon was in Moscow, he gave a speech titled "True Unification and One World," which was more religious than political, touching on the main themes of his breakaway theology. Church officials confirm that they are trying to set up an office in Moscow, but they insist that this initial presence will focus on business.

It would be easy to dismiss Moon as a mere cult leader—and one who has been widely discredited. But he has survived and, in some modest ways, overcome adversity. The move into the Communist and former Communist world is just another example of his adaptability. His ever-loyal followers may think he succeeds because he's the Messiah. But shrewd businessman and charismatic leader that he is, Moon doesn't seem to need God's help.

PETER MAASS, a special correspondent for *The Washington Post*, has reported from Seoul since 1987.

WHITE HOUSE WATCH

QUOTA, UNQUOTA

By Fred Barnes

Contrary to popular belief, President Bush really wanted to sign the Civil Rights Bill of 1990—but only on his own terms. So on Saturday, October 13, he made a final stab at personally producing an agreement between his administration and the civil rights lobby. Bush's diplomacy had three steps. First, John Sununu, the White House chief of staff, arranged for Vernon Jordan, the former National Urban League head whom Bush counts as a friend, to telephone the president at Camp David. Jordan did. Second, Bush proposed to Jordan that the two sides accept a compromise along lines Sununu and Democratic Senator Teddy Kennedy, the bill's chief sponsor, had discussed in July. Jordan responded positively to this, Bush told aides later. The friendly chat ended. Bush was sanguine.

The third step was the killer. Two days after the phone conversation, Jordan and William Coleman, a black Republican and former secretary of transportation under President Ford, showed up at the Justice Department to lock up the deal. They met with Attorney General Richard Thornburgh and Boyden Gray, the White House counsel. Thornburgh and Gray are moderate Republicans who regard themselves as sympathetic to the civil rights movement. Still, the meeting was chilly and unproductive. Thornburgh said the administration would accept the compromise Sununu had raised with Kennedy. This was a genuine concession, but Coleman said it wasn't enough. They talked but got nowhere. Jordan warned that if Bush vetoed the bill he would be portrayed as the David Duke of national politics. On that sour note, the meeting broke up. A week later Bush vetoed the bill—the sixteenth veto of his tenure.

In the first twenty-one months of his presidency, Bush spent more time on civil rights than any other domestic issue except the budget. The reason: his desperate fear of alienating blacks. He had been persuaded by Republican National Committee chairman Lee Atwater that a sizable chunk of the black vote could be lured to the Republican Party (and to Bush in 1992). He coveted a high favorability rating among blacks, which peaked above 70 percent before plummeting to less than 30 percent in some polls this autumn. But Bush's interest in blacks was not solely motivated by politics. As a moderate Republican, Bush fancies himself a friend of blacks and an ally of civil rights leaders. On this issue, Bush made clear as vice president, he and Ronald Reagan parted company.

Bush's attitude shaped but ultimately didn't determine the administration's response to the Kennedy bill (co-sponsored by Representative Gus Hawkins of California). The bill sought to overturn six Supreme Court decisions that made it more difficult for minorities and women to win job discrimination suits. At first the administration favored no legislation at all. Then it drafted its own bill. When this approach got scant support, Bush and his aides turned to negotiations. Thornburgh, Gray, and Sununu, along with business lobbyists in Washington, believed the Kennedy bill would prompt companies to adopt quotas. They persuaded Bush. At a Rose Garden ceremony on May 17, he told civil rights leaders the bill would have to be changed to eliminate pressure for quotas.

On July 12 Kennedy came to the White House for talks with Sununu (Kennedy spoke briefly to Bush too). Sununu thought he had the answer to the quotas problem. The bill, he said, should be changed three ways, all to ease the pressure on employers to adopt quotas. Minorities and women, not the company being sued, must bear the burden of proving unintentional discrimination. They must point to specific employment practices that cause minorities and women to do poorly in hiring and promotions. And the employer must be allowed to justify his practices on the basis of "a significant relationship to a significant business objective." The White House says Kennedy agreed to these. Kennedy says he didn't. In any case, the senator informed Sununu a week later that the changes were unacceptable.

That put a damper on negotiations for more than a month. Bush, while insisting on the Sununu changes, hadn't given up hope. In August Louis Sullivan, the

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secretary of health and human services, and Constance Newman, who runs the Office of Personnel Management, visited Bush in Kennebunkport. Both are black; both urged him to reopen negotiations. Bush was eager to. He telephoned Jordan and others to get talks rolling again. In September Jordan and Coleman met with Gray for breakfast at the ritzy Metropolitan Club. Sununu, distracted by the budget summit, had turned the issue back over to Gray and Thornburgh. This made a compromise less likely. Sununu, the White House conservative, was less rigid on the quotas problem than Gray or Thornburgh. In fact, Coleman concluded that neither wanted to reach a compromise (Gray and Thornburgh deny this).

Bush was torn. Vetoing a civil rights bill was anathema, but so was a bill that leads to quotas. He was receptive to practically any attempt to compromise. At one point Washington lawyer Lloyd Cutler intervened, but he couldn't bring the sides together. After the second overture to Jordan failed in October, Republican Senator Arlen Specter of Pennsylvania tried his hand. He proposed that the White House sign the Kennedy bill and a congressional resolution negating the quotas problem at the same time. Fine, Bush said. Sell the resolution to Kennedy and his allies. Specter couldn't.

By late October Bush had grown irritated with civil rights leaders. They wouldn't budge. Thornburgh, Gray, and Sununu wouldn't budge either. "If one or two had, Bush might have signed the bill," a senior White House official said. But the three were unanimous in recommending a veto if the bill wasn't changed. Coleman made a final run at Bush in a private Oval Office meeting on October 19. He argued against any compromise, but still warned that a veto would be a political disaster for Bush. After the meeting Sununu walked out of the building with Coleman, scolding him for not being more willing to make concessions.

Sununu had one final trick up his sleeve. Rather than veto the Kennedy bill immediately, he said Bush should sit on it and send proposed amendments to Congress. If they passed, he could sign both the bill and the amendments at one ceremony. If they didn't, Congress would at least be forced to stew for a week. This ploy had a fleeting life span. On October 20 a delegation of House Republicans met with Bush. Veto the bill, they said. At his request, they'd voted against it. Don't undercut us now, they said, by signing it, even with amendments. The last glimmer of compromise was gone. That night, a Saturday, Bush sent an alternative civil rights bill to Congress. This was pure public relations. He'd already decided to veto the Kennedy bill on Monday.

For all his anguish about not signing the bill, Bush managed to make the most of the veto. Cynical? Sure, but that's politics. Months before, on the night the bill cleared the Senate, Vice President Dan Quayle had penciled three paragraphs in his stump speech attacking quotas. When Quayle delivered the insert the next morning at a Republican breakfast in Houston, he evoked loud applause. My guess is Quayle told Bush of his experience in broaching the civil rights issue. Bush got the message. On October 26 the president began a marathon campaign trip on behalf of Republican candidates. At his first stop in Los Angeles he said: "In civil rights, we wanted expanded guarantees of equal opportunities for all. We want to eliminate prejudice in the workplace, but we do not want quotas. And this is why I vetoed that civil rights bill." Bush, too, was noisily applauded. •

A note from George Bush.

THE MEXICAN LUNCH

By Jacob Weisberg

Anthropologists of recent Republican administrations have learned to pay close attention to the gossip columns of *The Washington Times*. Though the Unification Church organ plays more softly than it did during its heyday in the Reagan years, it still resounds on occasion with the inside dope about who is moving up, who is on the way out, and who is sticking it to whom on the American right. At times it still reads like the trade magazine of the "access" industry.

One of those times was October 22, when John Elvin's "Inside the Beltway" column featured a "personal" note from President Bush to Paul Laxalt, former Nevada governor and senator, and now a highly paid Washington lobbyist. The letter, reproduced on the next page, tells Laxalt not to worry about a report by THE NEW REPUBLIC's Sidney Blumenthal that bad blood existed between the two at the time of the 1980 Republican convention. At the risk of engaging in excessive inside-the-Beltway, inside-TNR onanism, it's worth taking a closer look at how this document came to be, and what it signifies.

Blumenthal's recently published book, *Pledging Allegiance* (Harper Collins), is about the 1988 campaign. In the course of its analysis of Bush, the book rehearses the story of how he came to be Reagan's running mate in 1980. According to Blumenthal, Reagan's personal preference was for his "first friend," Laxalt. But the choice made no sense politically, since the two were similar in their appeal. "According to a member of Reagan's inner circle, Laxalt could stand almost any choice except one: George Bush," Blumenthal writes. Reagan and Laxalt are alleged to have derided Bush's "reedy voice, his boyish enthusiasm, his colored cloth watchbands." But Bush was the logical choice, and Reagan bowed to it. "One of Reagan's aides was dispatched with the unpleasant task of informing the vol-

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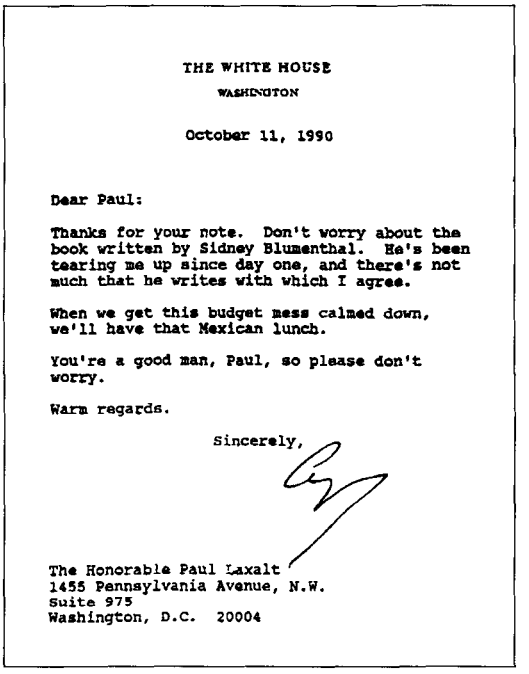
canic Laxalt that the pledge had been broken."

Blumenthal's publisher sent the book to Chuck Conconi, who writes *The Washington Post*'s "Personalities" column, a daily round-up of celebrity tattle. Conconi wrote a summary, which prompted an outpouring of denials from the principals. Laxalt wrote to the paper that "Blumenthal's statement that I 'couldn't stand George Bush' is absolutely false. For many years prior to the convention and to this day we have been good friends. I felt his selection was a wise one and so indicated to Mr. Reagan at the time. At no time was any pledge asked, nor given, to keep George Bush off the ticket. Lastly, I was notified personally by President Reagan of his decision to select George Bush when he called me on the convention floor."

Laxalt won't comment further, but his daughter Michelle, herself a successful lobbyist with offices alongside her father's in the sleek new Willard Office Building behind the White House, says her father wrote to Bush calling the Blumenthal account "unadulterated bullshit." This prompted the Mexican Lunch Note, which was probably leaked to the *Times* by Sig Rogich, a close friend of Laxalt's who does publicity for Bush. Laxalt also solicited a statement from Reagan that the book contained untruths: "In my conversations with Paul during the 1980 Republican National Convention, he was always very positive in his comments about George Bush. At no time was any promise given Paul that I would not ask the Convention to nominate George Bush to be our party's candidate for Vice President." The former president also denies that he ever lacked personal regard for Bush, and asserts that Laxalt was informed of his choice directly. Reagan's responses appeared in Conconi's column as well as in Elvin's, along with another denial from former Reagan aide and Wedtech lobbyist Lyn Nofziger that Laxalt ever opposed Bush.



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

October 11, 1990

Dear Paul:

Thanks for your note. Don't worry about the book written by Sidney Blumenthal. He's been tearing me up since day one, and there's not much that he writes with which I agree.

When we get this budget mess calmed down, we'll have that Mexican lunch.

You're a good man, Paul, so please don't worry.

Warm regards.

Sincerely,

The Honorable Paul Laxalt
1455 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Suite 975
Washington, D.C. 20004

What is curious about these forceful rebuttals is that they arrive now. The basic story—that Laxalt was unalterably opposed to Bush and upset about the choice—is not a new one. It was reported in 1980 by many journalists, among them Lou Cannon, who included it in his book *Reagan*, and Jack Germond, who put it in the book he co-authored with Jules Witcover about the 1980 campaign, *Blue Smoke and Mirrors*. Both reporters said they were surprised that the story was being treated as new news. Blumenthal's version adds only that Laxalt received a "pledge," and that he learned from someone other than Reagan that the choice was Bush. Though his primary source for the story remains anonymous, Blumenthal says that Republican activist and Laxalt friend Paul Weyrich (who was out of the country and unavailable for comment for this story) has since confirmed to him that Reagan pledged not to pick Bush. The other point is confirmed by presidential pollster Richard Wirthlin, who said that Laxalt was upset not with the decision itself, but "because of the way he was informed about the decision," i.e., not by Reagan himself.

In any case the Blumenthal refinements are beside the point, since Laxalt has challenged not only the details but the entire story that he was unhappy with the selection or that he and Bush ever had differences. "He has always had a good relationship with George Bush," Michelle Laxalt said. "It's a long-standing friendship going back to 1973. They are good friends." Why, then, did Laxalt not deny the story ten years ago, when it first appeared? Again according to his daughter, Laxalt says "he doesn't recall seeing" any of the earlier reports, and may now challenge them as well. This is simply not credible. A prominent Republican consultant who worked in the Reagan White House calls Laxalt's unhappiness over Bush's selection "one of the best-known stories in Washington." He says that "for anyone to deny it at this point is absurd." This source confirmed Blumenthal's version, but only with a stipulation of anonymity, as did several others I talked to.

A better explanation for Laxalt's late denial is that when Bush was vice president and he a senator and best friend to the president, the rumor of disaffection didn't matter. "When everybody thought Bush was a weenie who would never be president, he never protested," a well-placed Republican source noted. Now, with Bush in the driver's seat and Laxalt making his living peddling influence to corporate clients, the appearance of a rift matters a great deal. The extended Laxalt clan depends for its livelihood on the perception of access to the Bush administration. Paul Laxalt and brother Peter run the Laxalt Group. Daughter Michelle runs the Laxalt Corporation. The Group's clients include Martin Marietta Corporation and John Donohue, a businessman who is paying $300,000 a year to bring U.S. pressure to bear in resolving a tax dispute with the Honduran government. The Corporation's accounts include T. Boone Pickens, W. R. Grace and Company, Continental Airlines, the Motion Picture Association of America, and Philip Morris. Reminders of the old feud between Laxalt and Bush might just be bad for the family business.

With another president the perceived lack of chumminess would not be so damaging. In the Bush club-

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house, however, it is fatal to be seen as someone who is not a team player. Those closely associated with Reagan have been especially vulnerable to charges of insufficient loyalty. Last week Bush was reported to have told a meeting of GOP leaders that he wanted National Republican Congressional Committee co-chairman Ed Rollins fired because of a letter Rollins sent to candidates advising them to distance themselves from the president.

In the words of one Republican consultant, "What really matters to George Bush is having any Republican he can punish get on bended knee and apologize for ever opposing him." Laxalt, who launched an exploratory committee to consider a run for the presidency in '88, has been kneeling since Bush was elected. Bush has accepted his public act of contrition, and given him permission to rise. He now invites Laxalt to share Republican communion in the form of a Mexican lunch. •

The Mossad's best-selling critic.

SPOOK KOOK

By Steven Emerson

By Way of Deception, the memoirs of Victor Ostrovsky, a former member of the Mossad (written with Claire Hoy, a Canadian journalist), has survived Israel's attempt to block publication in the United States. It has even survived the rave reviews accorded it by Joseph Sobran and Alexander Cockburn. Its central charge—that Israel deliberately sacrificed American lives in Lebanon—has survived the scrutiny of *Newsweek*, which devoted two pages to a largely uncritical account of the book's allegations, and the book has climbed to No. 1 on the *New York Times* best-seller list. What it doesn't survive is an elementary checking of Ostrovsky's credentials for the claims he makes.

For the most part the book is a fabrication, drawn more from his overheated imagination than from his experience in the Mossad. The author has stitched together public details from newspaper clips about Israeli operations and American politics, has cited the real names of Israeli agents he learned in his training period, and has selectively quoted from several case studies provided to new Mossad recruits. The most shocking allegation is that while Ostrovsky was serving in the Mossad, officials deliberately did not relay to the United States a warning they had received from a terrorist informant that the U.S. Marine compound in Beirut would be blown up. "We're not there to protect Americans," he quotes an official as saying. As a result, Ostrovsky says, 241 Americans died. He even claims that he protested the decision to withhold information from the Americans and was reprimanded by his superiors for opening his mouth.

More than half of the book is based on firsthand experiences Ostrovsky describes as having taken place in 1982, 1983, and 1984. The bombing of the Marine barracks occurred in October 1983. Yet Ostrovsky didn't start working for the Mossad until December 30, 1984. In 1982, 1983, and for all but the last two weeks of 1984, he was not connected to the Mossad in any way, and never set foot in Mossad headquarters. During that period Israeli government, police, and financial records show that Ostrovsky, a graphic artist, was running a video store in downtown Tel Aviv, attending a computer course, and opening up a stained-glass business in Herziliya. And he was involved in several financial improprieties, in which he passed bad checks and turned police informer in a credit card forgery scheme.

But he was also clever, a quick thinker, and fluent in foreign languages, qualities that attracted the Mossad's attention. The Mossad sent him a letter arranging a preliminary interview on June 10, 1984; his first visit to a secret Mossad facility was in November 1984. He was finally hired on December 30, after fulfilling a promise to repay his bad debts. (Even Ostrovsky's own records verify this date. In the appendix to the book, Ostrovsky included his Mossad pay sheet in Hebrew, which states clearly that his association with the Mossad began on December 30, 1984.) For the next fourteen months Ostrovsky was trained by the Mossad as a cadet and, as his record shows, never participated in any operation. Two weeks before the end of his training courses, he was told that he did not make the grade and would not be accepted into the Mossad. On April 7, 1986, Ostrovsky packed his bags and left Israel for good.

Ostrovsky told me he started working for the Mossad "around December 1983—I can't recall the exact date, I'm not good on dates and places." I reminded him of what he had written in the book: that he was at the Mossad during the Marine barracks bombing in October 1983, and that he had complained to his superior about the denial of information to the CIA. Ostrovsky then said, "No—I wasn't there when it happened. I read about the Marine barracks episode in a case study. And when I read about it later on, I complained, which was the equivalent of protesting at the same time."

The rest of Ostrovsky's allegations in the Beirut chapter are equally suspect. For example, he says an FBI team went to Beirut to look for William Buckley, the CIA station chief, after he was kidnapped by Islamic terrorists in March 1984. But FBI and Defense Department officials insist that no such FBI mission took place. Ostrovsky says that Israel knew of Buckley's whereabouts. "He could have been saved," Ostrovsky wrote, but Israeli officials withheld that information from two CIA officials whose purported

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visit Ostrovsky dramatically describes firsthand.

Aside from the fact that he was not at the Mossad during this episode, senior American officials in the United States and Israel say the CIA never sent two agents to pay such a visit to Mossad headquarters. And declassified documents from the Iran-contra affair show that Israel desperately tried to get Buckley back—as well as their own hostages—by offering weapons sales to Iran in 1985.

By the end of the chapter Ostrovsky raises the possibility that Amiram Nir, the Israeli government's adviser on counterterrorism and a key Israeli operative in the Iran-contra affair, who died in a plane crash in Mexico in 1988, might still be alive (after getting cosmetic surgery in Geneva). That would come as a surprise to Amiram Nir's sister, who identified her brother's corpse.

There are other blunders. Ostrovsky, who portrays himself as a key player in Israel's war on terrorism, writes that Ahmed Jibril was responsible for the 1985 *Achille Lauro* terrorist attack. In fact it was Abu Abbas. He writes that the Mossad's budget amounted to "hundreds of millions a month." This translates to several billion dollars a year for an organization whose manpower is at most 1,200 and for a country whose entire defense budget is less than $6 billion.

Ostrovsky writes about American F-16s sold to Saudi Arabia. In fact there are no F-16s in the Saudi inventory. He says that Israel illegally sold thirty American Skyhawks to Indonesia. American military and State Department records show that the United States sold Indonesia fourteen Skyhawks in 1981 and approved the Israeli sale of sixteen Skyhawks in 1979. Ostrovsky claims that Israel flouted U.S. law in selling these aircraft, which, he said, he had seen "wrapped in bright yellow plastic" ready to be shipped to Indonesia. When I noted the discrepancy, and that all of the planes were delivered by 1983, before he started working at the Mossad, Ostrovsky said, "Obviously, we're not talking about the same planes—I'm talking about another deal that happened much later." I pointed out that American military records and all public international military inventories say that Indonesia has only thirty Skyhawks, a figure that hasn't changed since 1981. Ostrovsky replied, "These planes don't show up in the Indonesian inventory." He said he didn't check with publicly available references, because "at the time, Claire couldn't check those things because he's not a military correspondent. Besides you cannot have a guy going around asking questions when you are trying to keep the book a secret."

Weren't Ostrovsky's co-author and publishers the least bit curious about how Ostrovsky is able to provide scores of verbatim conversations with American, Israeli, Iraqi, French, Indian, Chilean, Panamanian, Egyptian, Syrian, Palestinian, and Lebanese intelligence agents and operatives, both dead and alive, in operations around the world that took place nearly twenty years ago? When asked how he got those details, Ostrovsky said: "First, I cannot tell you exactly, and two, everyone talks at the Mossad headquarters—there are no secrets there." He is asking us to believe that a trainee who was never involved in an operation would be made privy to every operational detail—including the most private conversations by the head of Mossad assassinations—in probably the most secretive and compartmentalized of the world's intelligence services.

When I pressed Ostrovsky about his access to the mutterings and thoughts of Arab terrorists, he said, "I listened to tapes—and anything I quoted I took from tapes. We even listened to the tone [of those on tape]." The explanation lacks credibility on two counts: if there were such tapes, surely he would have mentioned them in the book, and Ostrovsky acknowledges he doesn't speak Arabic.

There is no doubt that Ostrovsky learned various secrets during his limited association with the Mossad, and that he had access to the names of agents and officers, and to case studies provided to recruits. The real facts of the book are the names of Israeli agents in place. (In the United States there is a law against publication of the names of American intelligence agents.) But that is arguably Ostrovsky's only verifiable achievement: to put the lives of his former colleagues at risk. As for the rest, *By Way of Deception* undoubtedly deserves its title and its best-seller status. One merely wonders why its publishers didn't think to put it in the fiction category.

STEVEN EMERSON is a Washington-based writer on national security affairs.

The Hispanic-black feud.

RAINBOW COLLISION

By Linda Chavez

For more than a quarter century, blacks and Hispanics have been seen as allies in the civil rights struggle. No longer. Hispanics, who are quickly overtaking blacks as the nation's largest minority group, are furious that blacks treat civil rights as their private domain. Hispanic leaders want to redefine the civil rights agenda to include immigration reform and to increase Hispanic political power, even if it means defeating black candidates. Blacks, fearful of dwindling employment opportunities and influence, are trying to defend their gains and strike back at Hispanics.

The truth is that political tensions between blacks and Hispanics have existed since the early days of the

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civil rights movement. The conflict is ostensibly coming to a head over the issue of immigration. On a recent New York radio show, Hazel Dukes, president of the NAACP's national board of directors, charged that non-English-speaking immigrants are getting jobs that should go to blacks: "Why let foreigners—newcomers—have these jobs while blacks, who have been here for hundreds of years, can't support themselves or their families?" But the underlying cause is deeper, and it has been avoided by both minorities: Hispanics are more like other immigrant groups, which have assimilated into the American economic and political system within a few generations, than they are like blacks.

The seeds of discord were planted in the 1960s, when Hispanics felt they were being treated as an afterthought by civil rights leaders. Hispanics were few in number—less than 7 million—and lived, for the most part, in the five Southwestern states, away from the hub of civil rights activity. Hispanics had no national organizations to speak of until the Ford Foundation, in 1968, virtually created the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF), which became the country's most prominent Hispanic civil rights group.

One of the first public fights between blacks and Hispanics came in 1975 when the Voting Rights Act was up for extension. Blacks had made enormous gains in election to public office in the Deep South, a change due largely to provisions in the act that made it easy to challenge voting procedures. MALDEF wanted Mexican-Americans to get the same protections, but the NAACP feared that would jeopardize the whole bill. Nonetheless, the act was expanded to include not only Mexican-Americans but other minorities as well.

It soon became clear, though, that Hispanic gains could be won in some cities only at black expense. In New York and Los Angeles in the 1970s and '80s new Hispanic districts for state and local offices were carved out of previously black districts, and Hispanics began to replace blacks as their representatives. The most recent redistricting fight was in LA County, where a federal court found last June that the board of supervisors had discriminated against Hispanics, who make up 33 percent of the county, in drawing election lines. Blacks, who make up only 12 percent of the county's residents, charge that any plan to create a majority Hispanic district would jeopardize the chances of electing a black candidate, who would need a combination of black and Hispanic votes to win a seat.

Creating a majority Hispanic district—in Los Angeles or elsewhere—is not only impractical, it's unnecessary. Unlike blacks, Hispanics do not typically experience residential segregation. The areas where Hispanics are most concentrated tend to be enclaves of new immigrants, who can't vote anyway. But more important, Hispanics don't need a majority district to be elected. In fact, none of California's three Hispanic congressmen represents a district in which Hispanics make up a majority of the registered voters.

The immigration boom of the last ten years has compounded the tensions. Immigration has always been a troubling issue for blacks, who fear that immigrants will take jobs from them and depress wages. In 1986, despite strong opposition from Hispanics, black and union groups endorsed the Immigration Reform and Control Act, which imposes penalties on employers who knowingly hire illegal aliens. This past spring a General Accounting Office report charged that employers were discriminating against all Hispanics as a result of the act. When the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, the major umbrella civil rights lobbying group, would not back an effort to amend IRCA, Hispanic groups threatened to withdraw from the group. The crisis was averted when, in a rare concession to Hispanic sensitivities, some black organizations agreed to back repeal of employer sanctions, though so far this has gone nowhere in Congress.

But what blacks—and whites—are finding more difficult to accept is that many Hispanics are clearly willing to build political influence through gerrymandered districts composed largely of non-U.S. citizens, many of whom are illegal. At a recent conference on the Voting Rights Act at the Brookings Institution, the former president of MALDEF, Joaquin Avila, suggested that non-citizens be allowed to vote—a proposal even most Hispanic leaders are wary of endorsing. Illegal aliens are already included in census counts used to reapportion legislative districts, a policy that was upheld in a 1989 Supreme Court ruling. Some Hispanic districts consist of only half the number of eligible voters as non-Hispanic districts, which gives voters twice the voting power as those in other districts.

In recent years Hispanics have become more militant in fighting for the rights of illegal aliens and are not likely to change tactics simply to placate blacks. Hispanic organizations succeeded in 1986, as part of a compromise on IRCA, in winning amnesty for some 3 million illegal aliens currently living in the United States so that they could become legal residents. MALDEF and other Hispanic groups have pressed claims on behalf of illegal aliens through the courts as well. In 1982 the Supreme Court ruled that the children of illegal aliens are entitled to a free, public education. State courts in Texas and California have upheld illegal aliens' right to unemployment compensation and to in-state tuition at public universities.

Conflicts between blacks and Hispanics over the issue of immigration assume greater significance today than they did thirty years ago because immigrants now constitute a larger segment of the Hispanic population. When Hispanics first joined the civil rights coalition, they represented a largely indigenous minority group,

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like blacks. In 1960, 85 percent of the Mexican-origin population was U.S.-born, some of whom traced their ancestry in the American Southwest to the early seventeenth century. But a majority of all Hispanics today are immigrants or the children of immigrants, and for the most part they have been treated and behaved as such.

In the early years of the movement, Hispanics—mostly Mexican-Americans and Puerto Ricans—could claim that, like blacks, they had suffered discrimination and were entitled to the same anti-discrimination programs. Even then, however, the case was weak. Bias against Mexican-Americans was never as pervasive as it was against blacks. As early as 1931 attempts to establish segregated schools for Latino children were struck down in court. In Texas—certainly the most hostile environment Mexican-Americans faced—Jim Crow laws did not apply to Mexican-Americans. Nor did political leaders turn their backs on Hispanic voters. From the late nineteenth century on, Mexican-American votes were an important source of Democratic power in Texas. And Hispanics successfully ran for statewide office even in states with few Hispanic voters. Since 1900 six Hispanics have been elected governor in three states, New Mexico, Arizona, and Florida; it took until 1989 for the first black to be elected governor of any state, Douglas Wilder in Virginia. Hispanic leaders bristle at the suggestion that Hispanics have faced less discrimination in this society than blacks—but it's true.

The civil rights parallel with blacks is even less convincing today. Although most analyses show Hispanics, with blacks, at the bottom of the scale on most social and economic indicators, the statistics don't differentiate between U.S.-born Latinos and new immigrants, who—like immigrants of every generation—start off on the bottom rungs of the economic ladder but climb quickly. My own analysis of unpublished data obtained from the June 1988 Current Population Survey (which contains data on nativity of respondents and their parents) shows striking differences between U.S.-born Hispanics and new immigrants.

If the weekly earnings of all Hispanic men aged 25-65 are measured, they earn, on average, about 68 percent of what non-Hispanic whites do, roughly the same ratio as blacks. But Hispanics born here earn substantially more than either foreign-born Hispanics or blacks. The median earnings of U.S.-born Hispanic men are 80 percent of the median of comparable non-Hispanic whites. When education is taken into account, the gap between U.S.-born Hispanics and non-Hispanic whites narrows even further. Mexican-American high school graduates earn 90 percent of what non-Hispanic white graduates do; those with one or two years of college earn 97 percent of what similarly educated non-Hispanics earn.

Education is clearly the key to closing the income gap. Here, too, there are huge differences between U.S.-born and immigrant Hispanics, especially among those from Mexico. Seventy-eight percent of second-generation Mexican-American men (aged 25-34) have completed twelve or more years of school (compared with 89 percent of non-Hispanic whites), but only 28 percent of comparable Mexican immigrant males have done so.

It's impossible to predict how Latin immigrants and their children will fare in generations to come. But it's reasonable to assume that Hispanics will continue to follow the path of other immigrant groups before them: by the third generation social and economic disparities have largely disappeared. Even in educational achievement, Hispanics are not so different from some previous groups. Italians, for example, took longer to catch up to other Americans in education attainment than many other immigrant groups of their era. In fact, Italians didn't reach parity in education attainment until 1972, some sixty years after their peak immigration. Both Hispanics and Italians rely on the traditional belief that the family's needs take precedence over individual achievement—which encourages many young Hispanics to take jobs to boost family earnings rather than continue their education.

The family remains strong among all Hispanic groups except Puerto Ricans (most of whom settled in New York, where welfare policies contributed to the sorry state of the black and Puerto Rican family). Seventy-four percent of Mexican-origin families are married couples, compared with about 80 percent of all white families. Although out-of-wedlock births occur more frequently to Mexican-origin women than to whites generally—29 percent compared with 17 percent—they fall considerably short of those to black women, 62 percent. The babies of Mexican-origin women, even those who received little or no prenatal care, have a lower infant mortality rate and are healthier than black or white infants, a fact that confounds researchers. One reason Hispanic women have healthier babies may be that they are less likely to use alcohol or drugs than whites or blacks (though substance abuse among Hispanic men is relatively high).

Hispanics are steadily moving into the social and economic mainstream. They have leapfrogged blacks on almost every measure of social and economic status. Yet Hispanic leaders seem more intent on vying with blacks for permanent victim status than they do on acknowledging genuine Hispanic achievement. They should abandon such self-defeating tactics as herding Hispanic voters into protected political enclaves and using data on immigrants to bolster their claims that all Hispanics are deprived. The Hispanic future lies in recognizing that the vast majority of Hispanics can—and do—make it in this country. It is a future that increasingly has little to do with the civil rights rhetoric of a bygone era.

LINDA CHAVEZ, a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute, is writing a book about Hispanics in the United States.

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IS RELIGION JUST FOR THE IGNORANT?

In many intellectual circles the myth still circulates that religion is the preserve of the dim-witted and unlettered. Yet, recently *The New York Times Magazine* carried an article on the "return to religion" among intellectuals. From Harvard to Berkeley, and amid inquisitive people generally, there's an undeniable renewal of interest in the questions traditional religion raises and seeks to answer. This fascination is largely a result of the failures of secular substitutes for religion (such as rationalism, narcissism, technological utopianism, aestheticism, and extremist political ideologies) to give abidingly satisfying answers to the truly significant puzzles in life: goodness, suffering, love, death, and the meaning of it all.

By no means, however, does this religious renaissance entail embracing the ersatz gods of dog-eat-dog individualism, consumerism, or superpatriotism. Nor does it imply a retreat from working for peace, justice, or human dignity. Rather, there's an awareness that, as Jean Bethke Elshtain put it, religious commitment "can help further social reform," and that religion can supply the ethical bedrock upon which to make political choices which are far more durable than those based on passing ideologies and enthusiasms. Nor does the new openness to religion signify a hostility to science, but rather an appreciation of the limits of science and technology.

The New York Times Magazine article discussed the NEW OXFORD REVIEW as part of this return to religion, and rightly so. We at the NEW OXFORD REVIEW are spearheading today's intellectual engagement with what Daniel Bell terms "the sacred." We are particularly interested in exploring religious commitments that yield humane social consequences, as exemplified by such giants as St. Francis, Gandhi, Bonhoeffer, Barth, Tawney, Schumacher, Mounier, Dorothy Day, Archbishop Tutu, Simone Weil, Martin Luther King Jr., and Archbishop Romero. And we probe the literary and philosophical riches offered by such greats as Kierkegaard, Tolstoy, Buber, Auden, Eliot, Silone, Maritain, Waugh, Merton, C.S. Lewis, Walker Percy, Flannery O'Connor, and Graham Greene.

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Solzhenitsyn's epistle to the Russians.

TO THE FINLAND STATION?

By Michael Scammell

In his September homily on "How to Revitalize Russia," Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn broke a silence on Mikhail Gorbachev's policies that had intrigued the author's admirers for many years. Did this silence (which contrasted strikingly with Solzhenitsyn's repeated strident criticisms of Gorbachev's predecessors) indicate approval of the new man and his works? Not exactly. Solzhenitsyn did not condemn perestroika outright, but he did ridicule it for not moving fast or far enough. As for glasnost, he had nothing to say, although some comments suggested that, if anything, he felt that glasnost had gone too far. In general there was little in Solzhenitsyn's criticisms of the present system that does not appear daily in the Soviet press already (his article appeared in the official organ of the Communist Youth League, *Komsomolskaya Pravda*). Attention, therefore, focused on the other part of his article, namely his program for Russia's future.

Very early in Solzhenitsyn's career it became clear that, as a writer, he was addicted to the "big" questions in life, overtly patterning himself on classical Russian writers of the nineteenth century such as Tolstoy, Turgenev, and Dostoyevsky. Beginning in 1973, with the publication abroad of his *Letter to the Soviet Leaders* (he himself was still in the Soviet Union at the time), he also inaugurated a series of public statements on the subject of Russia's social, political, and spiritual health, with particular concern for its development "after communism." His 1973 *Letter* was quickly followed by three essays in a volume he edited called *From Under the Rubble*, and after his expulsion in 1974 he produced numerous articles and speeches on similar themes—until about six years ago, when he fell silent, focusing on his series of didactic novels about the First World War and the Communist revolution, collectively known as *The Red Wheel*.

Of all the works, the one that comes closest to his latest declaration in form and content is the *Letter to the Soviet Leaders*. A comparison of the two documents reveals some interesting parallels and differences. The original *Letter* was divided into seven longish chapters. In chapter one, "The West on Its Knees," Solzhenitsyn argued that the West was in a profound historical, psychological, and moral crisis, whereas the Soviet Union was at the peak of a staggering series of successes. In chapter two he warned of an impending war with China, and exhorted the government to avoid such a conflict at all costs, since it would end in the ruination of the country. Chapter three dealt with what Solzhenitsyn called the impasse into which the whole of civilization had entered: progress was a myth, economic growth was unnecessary, industrialization had polluted the world to the point of ecological disaster; if humankind did not radically change its ways, it faced extinction "sometime between the years 2020 and 2070."

The West, according to Solzhenitsyn, might just avert catastrophe by virtue of its versatility and inventiveness. The Third World might also do so because it hadn't yet entered on the industrial path. But for Russia the danger was the greatest, because of its blind insistence on aping Western ways. On the other hand, its backwardness gave it the opportunity to follow an alternative "third" course, and in chapters four and five Solzhenitsyn attempted to point the way. Russia should pull back not only from Eastern Europe, which he urged the Soviet leaders to renounce, along with all the trappings of empire, but from the world in general, and turn inward to nurture its unique material and spiritual riches. He advocated that Russia transfer the center of its development to the northeast of the country, adopt a technological policy of "small is beautiful," and concentrate on improving the social and spiritual conditions of its people. What the country needed was "an economy of nongigantism . . . *new* towns of the *old* type." He embellished his vision with eccentric details, such as: "We can perfectly well set up road barriers at all the entrances and admit horses and battery-powered electric motors, but not poisonous internal combustion engines. . . ."

Among the practical reforms Solzhenitsyn advocated were a reduction in the size of the armed forces, abolition of collective farms, the eradication of bribes, an upgrading of the school system, and improvements in the status of women. In chapter six he proposed the abandonment of Marxism-Leninism as the state ideolo-

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gy, and in chapter seven he warned against the importation into Russia of Western-style democracy, because the country was not ready for it. The authoritarian order would depend on a strong moral foundation, which Solzhenitsyn held had existed for a thousand years in old Russia in the form of the Orthodox Church. In the meantime, political power should remain with the existing leaders, but the privileged status of the Party should be abolished, and legislative power transferred to the soviets in preparation for more radical reforms to come.

The self-portrait that emerged from the *Letter* came as a shock to most people at the time. Solzhenitsyn's personality till then had been shrouded in mystery, and attention had been concentrated on his magnificent duel with the repressive Soviet government. But now, instead of the presumed liberal democrat issuing blasts against censorship, Party corruption, and human rights violations, there appeared an incurable romantic, a Slavophile dreaming of a Russian golden age, a crusty conservative turning his back on the twentieth century. True, there was still that thrilling prophetic tone to his voice, that profound grief for the sufferings of his people, expressed with his customary brilliance and eloquence. But a note of imperious self-righteousness had crept into his voice, an Old Testament certitude, and an unwavering belief in the spiritual superiority of the Russian people, which would miraculously save them from the alleged evils of Western-style development. All of this undercut the novelist's authority with many readers and raised questions about his judgment.

ALEKSANDR SOLZHENITSYN BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

The latest document, "How to Revitalize Russia," demonstrates that Solzhenitsyn's vision, though changing in many details, has not varied as much as some had expected in response to the radical changes of the last five years. It is divided into two equal parts, subtitled "The Near Future" and "Further Ahead." In part one, which is general and covers much of the same ground as *Letter to the Soviet Leaders*, there is naturally no mention of the decline of the West, of the triumph of the Soviet Union, or of the dangers of a war with China. Nor does Solzhenitsyn urge a national retreat to the Russian northeast, or stress the virtues of the Orthodox Church—indeed, he is surprisingly silent about the Church. However, he *can* point with satisfaction to the virtual abandonment of Marxism-Leninism as the state ideology, and to the Soviet retreat from empire, both of which he was urging back in the early '70s.

On this subject his thinking has developed considerably. In view of the virtual collapse both of the Soviet empire and of the Soviet state itself, he not only "accepts" the secession from the present union of the three Baltic republics, the three trans-Caucasian republics, four of the five Central Asian republics, and Moldavia, but he insists on it: "We must declare it loudly, clearly, and without further delay." The only exception is Kazakhstan—where, incidentally, Solzhenitsyn lived in exile for three years after his release from the gulag. He believes it should be divided in two, the northern portion going to Russia and the south declaring its independence (if it wishes). The remaining state, which would consist of the Russians, Byelorussians, and Ukrainians, Solzhenitsyn proposes to call the "Russian Union." He is aware, of course, of secessionist tendencies in the Ukraine and Byelorussia too, but appeals to these peoples to remain with their Russian brothers, since they were all part of the original medieval Russian state known as Rus. There is a personal dimension to these sentiments too: Solzhenitsyn's maternal grandfather was Ukrainian, and Solzhenitsyn grew up hearing the Ukrainian language at home (he even pronounces certain Russian words with a Ukrainian accent). But he seems prepared to make a concession even here: "Of course, if the Ukrainian people *really wishes* to separate itself, no one should dare to hold it back by force." But he adds a stipulation that referendums would have to be held in every settlement, district, and re-

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gion for the local populations to decide for themselves, a device that would effectively strangle secession at birth.

Comparable reservations accompany his statements on land ownership and private property. He comes out unequivocally in favor of some forms of privatization, but the restrictions he proposes cripple them. On land, he supports the right of farmers to possession of their plots for life, and even, grudgingly, their right to pass property on to their heirs. But the size of the landholdings must be strictly controlled, there must be no agribusiness, and above all there must be no foreign ownership. Land must be granted only to those who will guarantee to cultivate it conscientiously (the implication is that land can also be taken away). Private businesses also should be small-scale. There should be safeguards against concentrations of capital and controls over foreign investment, especially where raw materials are involved. Inviting in foreign capital to save Russia from its inefficiency is "a most dangerous idea. . . . We would be turned into a colony." Banks would be necessary, but "they should not be allowed to turn into usurious growths and become the hidden masters of all our lives."

One of Solzhenitsyn's main concerns throughout is to warn against "alien" Western influences. Western industrial practices not only lead to unnecessary waste and pollution, but have caused Western companies to jettison the "healthy concept of repairs." They also produce inflation, whereas Russia in the old days "lived for a century with the same prices." In the area of popular culture, Solzhenitsyn perceives the gravest dangers emanating from "American cultural imperialism." "The Iron Curtain did an excellent job of defending our country against everything good in the West . . . but the curtain didn't quite go all the way down, and allowed the liquid dung of a debauched and decadent 'pop mass culture' to ooze underneath, along with the most vulgar fashions and public displays—and our deprived youth greedily devoured this garbage." Not that Solzhenitsyn is any kinder to his countrymen. Soviet youth are this way because they have been corrupted by the lack of a proper family life, inferior schooling, and barbaric surroundings. In a chapter titled "But What Are We Ourselves Like?" Solzhenitsyn excoriates Russians for their complicity in the crimes of communism, and pillories the tribunes of glasnost and perestroika for their reluctance to repent, comparing them unfavorably to the West Germans after World War II.

Part two consists of a dense disquisition on the nature of democracy (with citations from Spengler, Montesquieu, Plato, Aristotle, Popper, Tocqueville, Mill, Pope John Paul II, and Ronald Reagan, roughly in that order), designed to show not only that representative democracy in all its known forms is a highly flawed form of government and incapable of eradicating injustices, but that it also fails to reflect the true will of the people, and is therefore unsuitable for Russia. Solzhenitsyn examines, and rejects, universal suffrage, the secret ballot, direct elections, proportional representation or any form of majority rule, and above all any role in government for political parties, which, as he has demonstrated in the past, he hates with a special intensity: " 'Party' means 'a part.' To divide ourselves into parties would be to split up into parts. To whom would a party, as a part of the people, be opposed? Obviously to the rest of the people who refuse to follow it."

Solzhenitsyn's ideal instead reflects the traditional Russian and Slavophile passion for consensus. What he understands and advocates is "democracy on a small scale," and he cites the traditional Russian village assembly (*mir*), American town meetings, and cantonal election gatherings in Switzerland as his models. There everybody knows everybody else, voting is by an open show of hands, and elected representatives are responsible to their neighbors and peers. Solzhenitsyn recommends the building of democracy in Russia from the grass roots upward, instead of from the top down.

Thus the present "soviets," or workers' and peasants' councils (themselves loosely modeled on the traditional *mir*), would be replaced with four tiers of Land Assemblies (the nineteenth-century Russian *zemstvo*), which would exist on the village, district, town, and regional levels, and would elect delegates to a governing "All-*zemstvo* Assembly." There would also be a strong president elected by a popular vote, who could nevertheless be impeached by a three-quarters majority of the Assembly, or confirmed in office for an extra term by a two-thirds majority. Finally there would be a second chamber or Conciliary Council (*duma*), vaguely resembling the English House of Lords and modeled on the medieval Russian Synodal Councils that existed before Peter the Great.

Solzhenitsyn emerges, in short, as a patriarchal populist. He favors a strong, even authoritarian, leader and is passionately concerned about the fate of the "little people," but he loathes the middle and professional classes, the "smatterers," as he calls them, and would like to bypass them in his blueprint for a power structure. Hence his support for small farms and small businesses, and hostility to anything larger; hence too his preference for informal, consensual politics and his hostility to parties.

His vision is stuck in the nineteenth century, in an age without radio, television, or a national press—let alone computers, fax machines, and the rest of the paraphernalia that are transforming the world into a global village from which Russia cannot possibly be excluded. Unfortunately such myopia almost certainly will undermine his reputation, just as the sheer detail and circumstantiality of his proposals expose his limitations. This is a pity. Solzhenitsyn's great authority has depended until now on his personal courage, his integrity as an artist, and his role as an upholder of moral and spiritual values. His courage is still not in question, of course, but it is only toward the end of

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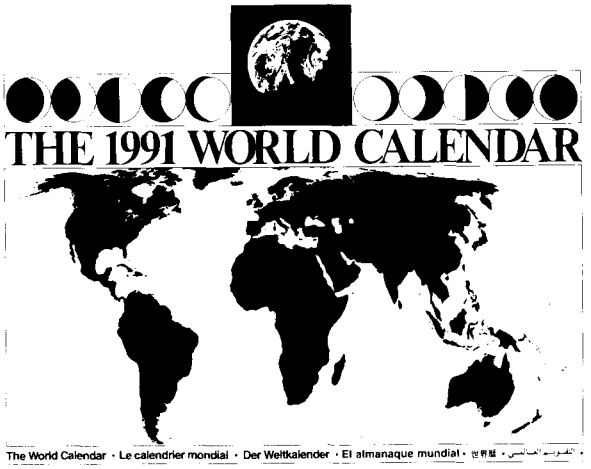

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part one of his declaration that he strikes the authentic Solzhenitsynian note: "The source of a society's strength or weakness lies in its spiritual level, and only secondarily in its level of industrial development. . . . Human freedom includes a voluntary self-restraint in favor of others. Our obligations must always exceed the freedom that is granted to us."

Had Solzhenitsyn stuck to what he knows and understands best, it is safe to say that the significance and impact of his words would have been greater. He could

Back in the USSR

MOSCOW

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's long-anticipated essay "How to Revitalize Russia," published throughout the Soviet Union on September 18, was widely seen as a prelude to his return home after almost seventeen years in enforced exile. Russia is now wondering if he will come back for good or only temporarily, and, either way, what role he intends to play.

All of the conditions he set for his homecoming have been met. Last February, when the great cellist-conductor Mstislav Rostropovich returned to Moscow to end his own long exile, he said he had not wanted to come home before Solzhenitsyn was able to do so. But his fellow exile had given him his blessing, he said, and a message. Solzhenitsyn would come back when all his works were published freely in the Soviet Union.

Solzhenitsyn's two great epics revealing the horrors of Stalin's camps, *The Gulag Archipelago* and *The First Circle*, have now been serialized in the country's leading literary journal, *Novy Mir* (circulation 2.7 million), and are being published in book form. His writing is appearing regularly in other journals, too, and a complete collection of Solzhenitsyn's works published abroad has been put on display in the foreign languages library in Moscow. In August his citizenship was restored by presidential decree.

The author's 16,000-word anti-Communist essay was published in the daily newspaper of the Communist Party youth organization, *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, which has a circulation of 22 million. The essay was also included as a supplement in *Literaturnaya Gazeta* (circulation 4.5 million), the weekly newspaper of the Writers' Union, which in 1970 expelled Solzhenitsyn for speaking the truth about the Communist system and in July 1989 voted to readmit him. The wheel has come full circle. "I have never seen such unanimity," declared Vladimir Karpov, the secretary of the Writers' Union, after the vote readmitting Solzhenitsyn. At this a voice from the hall cried, "At least not since we voted to expel him!"

The publication of "How to Revitalize Russia" was a major coup for *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, engaged like all Party-controlled organs in a life-or-death circulation battle with radical new competitors. It was made possible by the Russian parliament, which authorized the extra tons of newsprint needed for the sixteen-page pull-out pamphlet, a rare luxury for Soviet readers used to thin, single-section newspapers. *Komsomolskaya Pravda* thus won a long-standing competition among Soviet journals for the long-awaited message of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. Vitaly Korotich, editor of the radical weekly magazine *Ogonyok* (Little Fire), told me in an interview last year that he wanted Solzhenitsyn to send him the manuscript for publication. Korotich had already opened the door by publishing "Matryona's Home," Solzhenitsyn's most loved contribution to the genre of the village story, and by publishing works by the then-exiled poet Joseph Brodsky. Also in 1989 Vadim Borisov of *Novy Mir* visited Solzhenitsyn in Vermont, where he presented him with written questions from several Russian newspapers about his views on reform. Solzhenitsyn declined to answer them.

The essay caused a flurry of excitement, but in the end it was something of a one-day wonder. Perhaps if Solzhenitsyn had issued it earlier it would have caused a greater sensation. "We are living in such hectic times that I don't think everybody read it, even all those millions who get *Komsomolskaya Pravda* and *Literaturnaya Gazeta*," said Genrich Borovick, a people's deputy and writer of political plays. Russian readers are not easily shocked anymore, even by the publication of powerful denunciations of communism. Many expressed some perplexity at Solzhenitsyn's style of writing, a mixture of classical and contemporary Russian.

But it was a measure of the political impact of Solzhenitsyn's essay that Mikhail Gorbachev felt he had to address it in the Soviet parliament the day after publication. By coincidence deputies had been debating greater powers for the Soviet leader on the same day. Gorbachev said he had read the pamphlet twice. (Perhaps he noted with satisfaction the words, "Today presidential authority is ideally suited to the vast expanses of our country and to the abundance of its problems"—advice that produced some hollow laughter among radical deputies.) Solzhenitsyn is undoubtedly a great man, Gorbachev told a hushed chamber, but the writer would do well "to stop roaming over this land with his scissors and his plough," referring to Solzhenitsyn's endorsement of the breakup of the Soviet Union. Gorbachev found Solzhenitsyn's political views alien, he said, because the writer is "fully immersed in the past," and "the Russia of the past and the monarchy are unacceptable to me."

This was something of a canard. Gorbachev's remarks, broadcast on nationwide television, left the impression that Solzhenitsyn had advocated the return of the monarchy, which he had not, and they misleadingly associated him with the fringe czarist revival movement in Russia. Igor Vinogradov, a commentator for the weekly *Moscow News*, accused Gorbachev of denying the "strong spiritual support Solzhenitsyn's voice can give to our nascent democracy, rather than to those who would be happy to have him as their ally as a monarchist or great-power patriot."

Indeed, the essay laid to rest some of the worst fears of the reformers that right-wing "patriots" would find their manifesto in Solzhenitsyn's letter. Korotich had worried about the forces that would try to use Solzhenitsyn if he came back, noting that the right wing in Russia was identifying more and more with him. "They are leaderless," Korotich told me last year. "Solzhenitsyn is an alternative

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have acted (and might still act) as a moral force to his nation, reminding his fellow countrymen of the universal values underpinning all societies, and drawing attention to the standards that need to be striven for, if not attained, even at the most difficult junctures in human history. Instead he has virtually ignored this aspect of his responsibilities and has gone even further than he did in 1973 with a detailed political and economic program that is likely to be ignored, if not laughed out of court. •

leader and his program is an alternative for the right." Korotich had been concerned that Solzhenitsyn would be adopted by supporters of Pamyat, the extreme, anti-Semitic Russian nationalist organization. But the ultranationalists have been silent since the essay appeared, doubtless because Solzhenitsyn rejected the great power psychology they embrace. "Maintaining a great empire means killing our own people," he wrote. The "intoxication of empire" had come to mean, "as we slowly expire, wholehearted support for communism." This, argued Maxim Sokolov, hit too close to home for the "patriots."

"How to Revitalize Russia" was nevertheless a highly charged appeal to Russian nationalism, with its suggestion of the dismantling of the union of fifteen republics and the creation of a greater Russia. Its appearance coincided with the power struggle between the Russian parliament and the central government for control of the vast Russian federation. Boris Yeltsin, president of the Russian parliament, is, curiously, an embodiment of the ideal of a future democratic Russia with a non-party system of government put forward many years ago by Solzhenitsyn to Andrei Sakharov. The new draft constitution of the Russian federation also includes several articles that come close to Solzhenitsyn's views (which haven't changed a great deal over the years): the sovereignty of the Russian state is single and indivisible; the backbone of the state system is to be representative democracy resting on the principle of the division of powers between the center and the local authorities; the state is to be de-ideologized; the bulwark of Russia's economy should be a social market economy; and property is to be inviolable.

The letter has crystallized in people's minds as a call for a greater Russia. The paragraph everyone cites is the one in which Solzhenitsyn declares, "We have no real choice. We should immediately declare that the three Baltics, the three Caucasian and the four central Asian republics, and Moldavia should be separated from us irrevocably. If Kazakhstan in its Kazakh regions would also like to be separated, so be it." And if Ukrainians want to secede too, that's up to them.

Non-Russians have expressed unease about Solzhenitsyn's nationalism, which Sakharov once described as "not far removed from being slighting or hostile toward other peoples." Nikolai Neilands, a former deputy foreign minister of Latvia and a member of the Soviet parliament, contrasted the writer's isolationism with Sakharov's ideal of a Russia integrated into Europe. "I believe that Russia's future lies only in cooperation with the West, with Europe, so I am a little bit afraid of Solzhenitsyn's ideas," he said. "He believes in a special mission for the Russian people. This touches a chord with Russian nationalists, but it is dangerous. Any people could say they have a special mission, the Japanese in Asia, for example, or Germany. As a boy I remember very well how it was with Germany when it came to the Baltics with a special mission, so I am afraid."

In the Central Asian republic of Kazakhstan Solzhenitsyn's formula has drawn fire from Kazakhs and Russians alike. The local branch of the pro-reform writers' organization April issued a statement criticizing the suggestion that the republic might be split, with three-fifths becoming an independent Kazakhstan and the rest joining Russia. The statement also asked if Solzhenitsyn really knew the whole truth about Pamyat, which it claimed, without evidence, had gained strength from his letter. April was set up in Moscow in protest against the anti-Semitic atmosphere at a plenum of the Writers' Union, where some speakers called for a "pure" Russian literature.

The theme that Solzhenitsyn had been too long away kept recurring in the political reaction to the essay. Valentin Rasputin, a major contemporary Russian writer close to Gorbachev, told me that the exiled author, who had in "How to Revitalize Russia" praised the nineteenth-century system of *zemstvos*, or county councils, had been "torn away from the reality of present-day Russia—we can hardly go back to the *zemstvo* as it existed in old Russia." Vinogradov believed "the *zemstvo* system as Solzhenitsyn describes it does not seem radically different from our current soviets." Another village writer, Viktor Astafiev, feared the situation was so bad in Russia that if Solzhenitsyn returned he would be terrified by what he found.

Inevitably the comparison is made with Sakharov. For most Russians Sakharov and Solzhenitsyn were the two moral giants of their lifetime, synonymous with suffering and truth: the atomic genius who championed human rights and the former *zek* (slang for a prison camp inmate) who exposed the evil of the camps. To Russian people Sakharov became the conscience of the nation, and Solzhenitsyn remains a great author who told the truth. Few conceive of Solzhenitsyn returning to play a leading day-to-day role in politics. "Sakharov had political authority, accepted by everyone," said Rasputin. "Solzhenitsyn has greater moral authority." Sakharov, had he not possessed atomic secrets, undoubtedly would have been exiled abroad as Solzhenitsyn was. By remaining at home he enhanced his authority. "Sakharov, by always being in this country, certainly was more popular than Solzhenitsyn," remarked Borovick.

Most people would probably agree with the views of Maxim Sokolov. "Today Solzhenitsyn the political figure has been eclipsed," he wrote in *Commersant*. "Russia has entered a new bourgeois-democratic era, while he has remained in his own, past world. Many are the exiles who have shared his fate, respected more for their love for the homeland from which they were rejected than for their understanding of its current problems."

CONOR O'CLERY

Conor O'Clery is Moscow correspondent for *The Irish Times*.

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

To the Manor Born

Barbet Schroeder is an unusual man, even for the film world. Born in Tehran (1941), he got a degree in philosophy at the Sorbonne, became a producer of jazz concerts and a film critic, then a film producer. He produced three of Eric Rohmer's most rarefied films. Then he began to direct and made, among others, a documentary about Idi Amin and *Maîtresse*, which I recall as one of the wildest films ever shown outside porn houses. His last picture was *Barfly*, a dreary attempt to deal fictionally with the life of Charles Bukowski, the American poet and barfly.

Now Schroeder has made **Reversal of Fortune** (Warner Bros.), which is both a product of his past and an anomaly for him. Its ambience of sex and crime and suggested orgy is straight Schroeder. The polish and pace—the sheer intelligent drive of the film—are unlike any of his work that I've seen.

Reversal of Fortune is based on the book by Alan Dershowitz, Harvard law professor and legal practitioner, recounting his successful appeal for Claus von Bülow, who had been convicted of assault, by injection, with intent to murder his wife, Martha. She, always called Sunny, had been rendered permanently comatose, a vegetable.

The film's obvious structural problem was that Sunny would be able to appear only in flashbacks. This would possibly have been adequate but was cinematically limiting. Nicholas Kazan, the screenwriter, found a way to bring Sunny into the present tense of the story—by giving us her voice, speaking to us from within her bed-bound unconscious body, thus providing her side of events. This device creates an extra dimension of horror by suggesting that, within the vegetable body, a sentient being is trapped. Only once is the device used too rhetorically. At the very end we hear Sunny say, as we look at her body, that we'll never know what really happened until we are where she is. Not many of us are going to be consoled for crossing over, into coma or beyond, by the hope that at last we'll get to know the truth about the von Bülow case.

By now that case is too familiar to need summary here. Either the relatively poor European husband did or did not inject his very rich American wife with insulin—in a botched murder attempt that rendered her insensate. Several versions of what might have happened are seen in the film. What is clear is that, after Claus had been found guilty and was let out on bail (a million dollars) pending his appeal, Dershowitz took on the case, and, with the help of a brigade of assistants, including some of his students, was able to get the Rhode Island Supreme Court to reverse the conviction.

The film is built on a strong element in American life that Americans pretend isn't there: class. *Reversal of Fortune* (a clever title) opens with an aerial shot of some majestic Newport mansions—"cottages," as the owners call these summer residences. Then we go inside the von Bülow house, which suggests Versailles. Soon we visit the Dershowitz house in Cambridge, a nice professorial place, where basketball is practiced in the back and takeout Chinese food is consumed within.

The contrast continues. We see the past lives of Sunny and Claus, she enduring his philandering, he enduring her drugs and drink and self-absorption. We also see the Dershowitz circle, full of warmth and bustle and informality. It's hard to complain that Kazan stacked the cards in favor of middle-class vitality as against super-rich lassitude: the facts are the facts. But Kazan misses no chance to make the most of those facts, to exploit the truth that life is a poor artist and has no sense of cliché.

The preparation of the appeal gets a lot of attention, with Dershowitz's corps divided into small groups, each concentrating on a single aspect. A lot of attention goes, too, to flashbacks of what may or may not have happened in the huge von Bülow Fifth Avenue apartment and the Newport cottage. (Glenn Close is insidiously convincing as the neurotic Sunny.) But the legal aspects of the film are not novel; for instance, much time is devoted to the film-worn truism that every accused person, no matter what we think of him or her, is entitled to legal defense. And the question of what really happened to Sunny is not overwhelmingly gripping.

Class—plus what class empowers—is the real meat of the film. Ron Silver deals vigorously with Dershowitz, suggesting that this man (on screen at least) has taken pains to emphasize his Jewishness, his enthusiasms and way of life, so as not to

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truckle in the slightest to Ivy League style. Silver carries this flavor, open yet quasi-belligerent, into his encounters with the upper crust. Curly-headed here, Silver is like a busy terrier sniffing his way around new surroundings, lifting his leg when he pleases, knowing that he will be tolerated only as long as he catches rats.

But the film depends on Claus. The role is well written. Every phrase—quoted or invented—is apt, helpful to some facet of the man. Jeremy Irons performs the role brilliantly. For once that wearied word is precise, in two ways: it applies to the construction of his performance, which contains matters—like sweeping entrances—that only a skilled theater actor could manage; and it applies to the ultimate effect, a scintillating, cold diamond.

First, Irons is tailored perfectly. This is no mere matter of decor; it seems an article of faith with Claus to wear exactly the most suitable and most expensive clothes at any given moment. (I once saw the real von Bülow at the opera, moving easily in about $8,000 worth of evening dress.) Irons wears these clothes à la Claus.

Beyond that, he handles perfectly the elegant idleness of the man. True, Claus makes a point of wanting some sort of work—which makes trouble with Sunny—but he wants work as he might want to take up polo. He bestows affection where appropriate, for instance on his daughter; but we feel that this is done less out of good feeling than good form. His philanderings, with the implication that they are wickedly unconventional, seem less matters of passion than of gentlemanly obligation.

But even beyond that, Irons, surely with Schroeder's help, has seen Claus as the scion of a long line. European literature is full of aristocrats and elevated bourgeoisie for whom the world exists in pure solipsism, a dull place enlivened only by pleasures, enlivened further if those pleasures are exercises of power. At present the most familiar example of the breed is Valmont in *Les liaisons dangereuses*. Irons creates a Valmont of today, slightly inhibited by today's conventions but with anachronistic imperatives of the imperial self as a credo.

The incongruence of such a character in an age of supposed egalitarianism, underscored by the alliance of von Bülow and Dershowitz even more than their opposition would have done—that is the real interest of the film, rather than the details of the criminal case. Irons, busily offset by Silver, gleefully choreographed by Schroeder, gives the picture its real bravura reason for being. •

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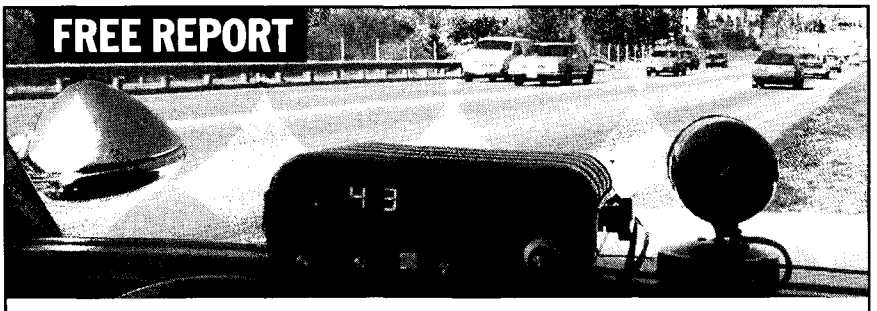

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Robert Brustein on Theater

The Avant-Garde and Shock Art

What currently passes under the rubric of the "avant-garde" has lately been subject to considerable detraction, and not just from the myrmidons of the moral majority. Intellectuals are getting into the act as well. The sociologist Daniel Bell has for years been calling modern art an anti-social, anti-democratic expression. Hilton Kramer, previously a vigorous advocate of the vanguard (as editor of *Arts Magazine*, he rebuked me thirty years ago for underestimating the importance of abstract expressionism), has long since been holding up the rear guard, deriding advanced art as a chic and empty status symbol. A few weeks ago Richard A. Bernstein, who has been writing very intelligently on culture in *The New York Times*, made similar accusations in the Arts and Leisure section, asking why the "avant-garde" should seek funding from the NEA when its main purpose was to overturn the Establishment.

The arguments are difficult to counter because, it must be admitted, a subspecies of vanguard art has always been more interested in provocation than creation. The locus classicus of what we might call Shock Art is Dada, whose founder, Tristan Tzara, began the movement by sitting onstage reading a newspaper article while a bell rang so loudly that the audience couldn't hear him. (Irate spectators threw eggs, salad, pennies, and beefsteak at the performer, inspiring Tzara to declare the event "a great success.") This sort of playfulness had its violent side as well. The characteristic Dada act was said to be the shooting of a loaded revolver into a crowded street. In the same random tradition, Shock Art in our own country has sometimes been associated with setting off explosives in the lobby or mutilating helpless animals. When Annie Sprinkle invites the audience onstage to examine her genital area through a magnifying glass, the line between feminist protest and shocktrooper tactics fades to invisibility.

As a civil libertarian, I must defend Ms. Sprinkle's right to expose herself to anyone who wants to look. Although I haven't seen the performance in question, or the genitals, I confess to doubts about the aesthetic value of either. (I was reminded of Lenny Bruce's account of meeting with a girl in a see-through dress—"only you don't wanna!") Political activism without artistic purpose is not an appropriate avenue for funding by the NEA, which is, after all, an endowment for the *arts*. But this is not the same as denying funds to performances of artistic quality that *also* have political content, just because you disagree with the politics.

The important thing is to make distinctions, and that is where those who generalize about the avant-garde are failing a crucial intellectual responsibility. Though a few renegade activists may be devoted to provocation, it is wrong to say that the primary function of all vanguard art is to shock. The common purpose of the great modern artists has been to explore the boundaries of what is known—which is to say, to experiment with new forms in the hope of extending human consciousness. This process may prove shocking to some. Anything new is disturbing to the nervous system. But in such cases shock is a result, not an intention. In writing Molly Bloom's soliloquy in *Ulysses*, Joyce was hardly trying to bring a blush to the cheek of a young person. His objective was to investigate the stream of consciousness of a sensual woman on the verge of sleep. In the act of exposing uncensored thoughts, he exposed himself to censorship. Stravinsky did not intend to drive Boston matrons out of Symphony Hall by composing *Le Sacre du Printemps*, any more than Ibsen or Duchamp wanted to bring obloquy on himself by writing *Ghosts* or painting *Nude Descending a Staircase*. In each instance, the artist upset his contemporaries with works that now seem perfectly innocuous to us.

With a few honorable exceptions, critics have usually been hostile to new expression. The enmity between the humanist and the artist is of long standing. Generally speaking, the critic represents the tastes of the audience while the artist follows the imperatives of his vision, making conflict inevitable. That is why NEA panels have been staffed with people from the same field as the applicants. "Peers" are more likely to understand the intentions of an artist than theoreticians or laypeople. Since these peers are sometimes applicants themselves, they have lately been charged with conflict of interest in evaluating grants, though they are asked to leave the room when their grants are being discussed. A new Senate resolution would bar applicants from the panels altogether, thus effectively banishing artists from the process. Still, occasional self-interest on the part of individuals is a lot less dangerous than the self-interest of representatives on behalf of multicultural groups. And it is infinitely preferable, I think, to the ignorance of laypeople or the arrogance of critics who believe they know more about art than those who make it.

The complaint that the avant-garde seeks to maintain its defiant stance while remaining the recipient of federal funding or the plaything of the wealthy is really just another way of denying the artist his right to explore new forms. It is true that American innovators are often recognized more swiftly than, say, van Gogh, who sold only two paintings in his lifetime. It is also true that even the most militant revolutions are instantly assimilated by the culture as, say, the slogans of the 1960s quickly became advertising copy for dress styles.

But who is responsible for this phenomenon? The very media that now are criticizing it. The insatiable hunger of newspapers and popular magazines for marketable personalities and instant culture has meant that people who show the slightest trace of talent are turned into material for feature stories and personality profiles—with the result that they often end up repeating the formulas that brought them attention in the first place. Philanthropic support from public and private sources is essential to permit them to develop in new directions before being dumped on the scrap heap of discarded media fashions.

This is a long preamble to my review of the event that originally prompted Bernstein's article in the *Times*—Martha Clarke's **Endangered Species**, which recently aborted a run at the Brooklyn Academy of Music's Majestic Theater after being savaged by the critics. So much for chic and fashion. In this case I believe the reviews were just: the piece is sadly lacking in tone and musculature. Still, the sound that pervades *Endangered Species* is hardly the rumble of shock. It is rather the murmur of a hemorrhaging heart, being a mild dance-theater essay on the human nature of animals in contrast with the bestial nature of men. Clarke did manage to shock a few people with her first endeavor, *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, by following Hieronymus Bosch in depicting the postlapsarian fate of humankind. But *Endangered Species* is more a tribute to the delicate discernment of quadrupeds, endangered by the brutal

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actions of the biomorphic unit, man.

The text is Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, with an emphasis on the passages regarding the Civil War. The animal kingdom is represented by two large dray horses, a pony, and a particularly ingratiating African elephant named Flora. The humans are men and women of several colors and shapes, including a dynamic and appealing midget. Richard Peaslee and Stanley Walden have arranged a medley of French art songs, Tin Pan Alley tunes, and Pergolesi's lovely "Stabat Mater." And Robert Israel, the set and costume designer, has devised an exquisite abstract setting consisting of a dark sawdust floor, decorated with disparate pieces of furniture and a large ceremonial door plastered against a gouache wall. This design, sitting simply on the stage of the artfully parched and peeling Majestic Theater, is the most arresting thing about the production—and its finest moment comes at the very start, when the door swings open to reveal the elephant, drenched in Paul Gallo's pastel lighting, ambling delicately across the stage as if the ground beneath its feet were made of wet sponge.

Other highlights involve circular parades by the horses to the sound of bells, along with a few equestrian and acrobatic turns. The lowlights have to do with relentless evocations of human suffering and victimization, examples including a black man punched and kicked to the accompaniment of amplified groans on tape, the same black man laying a whip on the door as if he were lacerating his own back, a naked runner being chased and eventually shot as Hitler's voice rants during a Nuremberg rally, and a variety of other cruelties representing the inhumanity of man to man (and man to woman, and both to beast).

This is interesting enough to watch for a while, Clarke's gift for drawing handsome stage pictures being undiminished. What hasn't developed sufficiently is her gift for narrative action, character, sustained conflict, or any dramatic element beyond the heightening of a single overriding theme. After victim theater involving women, blacks, gays, and other minorities, we now have victim theater involving animals. We've become a nation of victims. Pretty soon the victimizers will become a minority, demanding a theater of their own. Anyhow, I amused myself during the slow passages by imagining a new branch of Actors' Equity called Animal Equity, with built-in nontraditional casting guarantees to ensure that elephants are allowed to play donkeys and rhinos giraffes, so long as snow leopards are not imported from abroad to steal the roles of native Siamese cats.

But Clarke has suffered enough. She is a legitimate artist with the breadth and talent needed for development. I think it is fair to say again that she also needs to let her imagination percolate at a slower rate if she is to advance beyond the promise of *The Garden of Earthly Delights*. What she doesn't need from any of us are lectures about the failings of the avant-garde.

Another bulletin from the NEA: John Frohnmayer, chairman of the Endowment, has overturned the decision of the Special Exhibitions panel and denied a $40,000 grant to Boston's Institute of Contemporary Art for the mixed-media artist Mike Kelly. His work, to quote from David Ross, head of the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston, "deals . . . with the pathology of our times [including references] to sexuality and sociology, some of which deal with nationality and nationalism, some of which deal with madness and particular forms of modern schizophrenic behavior."

Kelly joins Karen Finley, Holly Hughes, John Fleck, and Tim Miller in having peer-panel approved grants rejected by higher intelligences. People used to argue the merits and dangers of establishing a culture czar to set policy for the arts. The arguments are over. We now have one. And what we've got is not a discerning artist-thinker like André Malraux but a Bush-appointed

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bureaucrat whose sole artistic policy consists of placating the Helmsites on the Hill. The report of the independent commission evaluating the NEA not only proposed that peer panels include more laypeople and multiculturists—and fewer artists—but also suggested that the chairman take more responsibility for the grants. There was no wisdom in either of these proposals. They have helped to create a serious crisis in the arts. •

The anxiety of global influence.

What Is World Poetry?

BY STEPHEN OWEN

Let me begin with a gentle heresy, that no poet has ever made a poem for himself or herself alone. Poems are made only for audiences. And unlike the audiences for the more lucrative arts, the audiences for whom poems are made are always imaginary ones. I confess that this heresy is itself imaginary: it forces us to see an Emily Dickinson who dreamed into being a century that could so richly appreciate her work. Still, it is a useful heresy, because it helps us to understand the forces at work in the formation of a creature that never existed before: "world poetry."

The imaginary audiences of poets are ruthless in their capacity for scorn and extravagant in their capacity for approval. The real audiences tend to be far milder in both. It follows that the imaginary audience, by the sheer intimidating force of its suspected likes and dislikes, has the greater power to shape the direction that a poet's work will take. The imaginary audiences also have the tendency to grow swiftly and immodestly. The poet may begin by imagining the responses of a small group of friends who profess interest in poetry, and who will, for friendship's sake, probably read and like what a poet has written. Pretty soon local poetry prizes are being awarded while crowds cheer, and they are followed in quick succession by national fame, a place in the canon, and immortality.

American poets have the provincial's sweet gift of needing to dream no further than an eternity of English-speaking audiences. To write in the dominant language of the age is to have the luxury of writing with unshaken faith in the permanence of a culture's hegemony. But poets in many other countries and languages must, as their imaginary audiences swell, dream of being translated. And thus they must write envisaging audiences who will read their work in translation. For a poet, such speculation runs the fine margin of nightmare. Not to imagine being read and admired beyond one's linguistic borders, however, is to accept a painful limitation, a sense of provinciality. A few of the hardiest poets can do this; but those are the ones we never read in translation, and thus we know very little about them.

STEPHEN OWEN, professor of Chinese and comparative literature at Harvard University, is the author most recently of *Mi-lou: Poetry and the Labyrinth of Desire* (Harvard University Press).

The August Sleepwalker
by Bei Dao
translated by Bonnie S. McDougall
(New Directions, 144 pp.,
$16.95, $8.95 paper)

The Nobel Prize plays an interesting role in shaping "world poetry," particularly the poetry of the Third World. Its lure can sometimes be immense: it is "international" (that is, Western) recognition that casts glory on one's nation and promises a moment when the provincial can stand in the global center of attention. There is a waiting line for the prize, and a general opinion that every country ought to have its turn, on the assumption that literary talent should be as fairly distributed as seats in the United Nations. The most interesting aspect of the Nobel Prize for literature, however, is that it is commonly given for literature in translation. When the Nobel Prize is awarded to a poet, the success of that poet's work in translation is inevitably an important, perhaps even a deciding, factor.

This need to have one's work approved in translation creates, in turn, a pressure for an increasing fungibility of words. Yet poetry has traditionally been built of words with a particular history of usage in a single language—of words that cannot be exchanged for other words. Poets who write in the "wrong language" (even exceedingly populous wrong languages, like Chinese) not only must imagine themselves being translated in order to reach an audience of a satisfying magnitude, they must also engage in the peculiar act of imagining a world poetry and placing themselves within it. And, although it is supposedly free of all local literary history, this "world poetry" turns out, unsurprisingly, to be a version of Anglo-American modernism or French modernism, depending on which wave of colonial culture first washed over the intellectuals of the country in question. This situation is the quintessence of cultural hegemony, when an essentially local tradition (Anglo-European) is widely taken for granted as universal.

I have a friend who writes poetry in classical Chinese and "new poetry" in vernacular Chinese. He thinks of his classical poetry as "Chinese," as deeply embedded in its history, as immensely pleasing to him in the crafting, but not as an entirely serious endeavor. It is the poetry he writes for his friends. His "new poetry," by contrast, is what permits him to think of himself as a Poet, what offers him the hope of eventual recognition. He sees the "new poetry" as simply poetry, as if it had no nationality or history. He does not recognize the weight of local European literary history that lies behind some of the conventional moves that he makes or the habitual images that he uses.

The formation of a world poetry that anyone can write and that can be translated into something still recognizable as poetry requires a corresponding redefinition of the "local." Within "world poetry," in other words, the poet must still find an acceptable means to declare his or her nationality. Instead of a true national poetry, all poetries become merely ethnic. Poets often appeal to names, images, and traditions that serve to bolster local pride, and to satisfy the international reader's desire for "local color." At the same time, the intricate learning presumed in traditional poetries is forbidden. Elements of local color in a poem are the verbal flags of nationality; and like a well-packaged cruise, they will give the international reader an altogether safe and quick experience of another culture.

Apart from this carefully circumscribed "local color," there is a strong preference for universal images. This poetry tends to be studded with concrete things—preferably things that are frequently exported or imported, and thus readily translatable. Phrases of local

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weight or objects rich in local lore are avoided, or they are framed, that is, they are held up for poetic consideration and provided with little commentaries that explain them within the poem. There is an illuminating contrast to this practice in the profligate use of American slang and the fashions of popular culture by many contemporary American poets, who write heedless of the fact that in fifty years not even American audiences will be able to understand the allusions and the wordplay.

We should finally introduce ourselves into the strange cultural drama of lyric poetry that is unfolding in the last part of the century. *We* are the real international audience, as opposed to the imaginary one. We have come to occupy some of the seats left vacant for the imaginary international audience. There are only a few of us scattered widely through a huge auditorium. We shout to one another across the empty chairs. We have been assured—we read it clearly in the advertising on the back of the books' dust jackets—that if only this performance were taking place where the poet was "at home," the auditorium would be packed to overflowing with cheering crowds. Meanwhile, back home, it often happens that the local audiences have been assured that the international performances always play to cheering crowds, and that only at home is the poet inadequately appreciated.

What are we seeking when we come into this auditorium? International audiences, real and imaginary, are usually daunted by the strenuous demands that are made by the traditional poetries of other cultures. At the same time, audiences do not want poetry from which all traces of nationality or ethnicity have been erased. They want the poetry to represent the other country or culture. They seek some show of local color and local issues within a kind of poetry that is essentially familiar, easily accessible; they seek a cozy ethnicity. And, if that is the case, then we, as international readers, must recognize that this poet from another land and from a different culture is writing at least in part for us, writing at least in part what he imagines will satisfy us. He is writing in an idiom that has been formed from reading our own poetry. Moreover, these "new poetries"—new Chinese poetry, new Hindi poetry, new Japanese poetry—have often been formed by reading Western poetry in translations, sometimes in very poor translations. Which is to say that we, the Anglo-American or European part of the international audience, are reading translations of a poetry that originally grew out of reading translations of our own poetic heritage. If poetry is, as the cliché goes, what gets lost in translation, this is a most troubling situation.

Or it may be that the international readers of translated poetry do not come in search of poetry at all, but rather in search of windows upon other cultural phenomena. They may be looking for some exotic religious tradition or political struggle. These Western fashions in exotica and causes are ephemeral things. Who now reads Tagore? He is a bargain that fills the shelves of poetry sections in used book stores. In contemporary Chinese poetry, the international reader is likely to come looking for a reference to the recent struggle for democracy. The struggle for democracy in China is in fashion, while other ongoing struggles for democracy have won their moments of attention and faded from notice.

Quite apart from our political opinions, and quite apart from effective political action, there is a thrill at the representation of suffering—the traditional experience of pity and fear, coupled with virtuous indignation. The suffering of oppression, however, does not guarantee good poetry, anymore than it endows the victims of oppression with virtue. And there is always a particular danger of using one's victimization for self-interest: in this case, to sell oneself abroad by what an international audience, hungry for political virtue, which is always in short supply, finds touching. Writing on the struggle for democracy has very little to do with the struggle for democracy, and if anything worth reading comes out of the writing about it, we won't know for a while—not until we can separate it from its function as a selling point.

From the broader case of "world poetry," we may turn to the particular case of modern Chinese poetry. The tradition of classical poetry in China was a long and very complicated one. By the end of the imperial period, in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this was a sharp, often witty, highly nuanced and allusive poetry, and a poetry much overburdened by its own history. It was a weary poetry at a dead end. Perhaps it was for the Chinese tradition as a whole that Bei Dao, who was born in Beijing in 1949, offered the following beautifully elegiac image in "Random Thoughts":

> steles wrapped in moss soft as silk
> are like extinguished lanterns

Although China had perhaps the deepest sense of the encumbrance and the attenuation of its tradition during the encounter with the West, that encounter was no less an upheaval in the poetries of many other great Asian cultures. Western cultural self-confidence arrived to-

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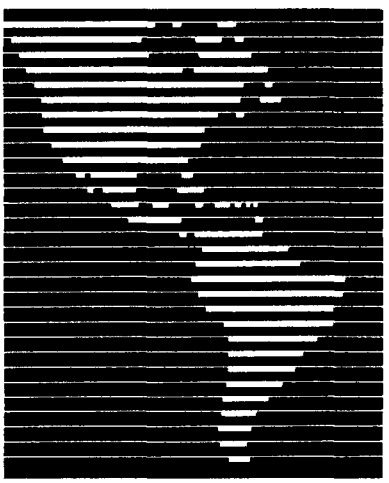

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gether with the reality of Western military and technical power. Western poetry, in most cases Romantic poetry, entered these traditions like a breath of fresh air. The excitement at the strange, exotic poetry of Europe was not unlike the West's excitement on encountering Asian literary traditions—but in this case the excitement was coupled with cultural shock, and often with national humiliation.

Romantic poetry opened up a whole new range of topics and modes of treatment, a whole new sense of what poetry is. Yet Romantic poetry usually arrived in translation, or through an imperfect knowledge of the original languages. Thus it came to China, as to other countries, with little sense of the weight of the cultural and literary history that lay behind it. It appeared as a poetry free of history, which was the very lie that Romantic poetry told about itself, that it was a miraculously new thing. Nobody who knows English poetry well can believe that particular myth about English Romantic poetry (China's particular colonial poetic import), but to the outsider the claim of novelty was credible, and it gave a hope of escape from a history that seemed to have failed.

From that first hope for a poetry free of history, for words that could be transparent vehicles of the liberated imagination and pure human feeling, many early twentieth-century poets in Asian traditions created new poetries that sought to break with their past. It was a grand hope, but it was rarely realized successfully. After the initial encounter with Romantic poetry, Chinese poetry of this century has continued to grow by means of the engagement with modernist Western poetry; and as in any cross-cultural exchange that goes in only one direction, the culture that receives influence will always find itself in the secondary position. It will always appear slightly "behind the times." The Western novel was successfully assimilated and transformed, but the new poetries of Asia often seemed thin and wanting, particularly in comparison to the glories of traditional poetry.

The fate of contemporary poetry in China could easily serve as the figure for a more profound sense of cultural loss and decline, a fall from the center of the universe to an uncertainty about where and who one is in a world that no longer has either a center or clear boundaries by which to orient oneself. Bei Dao writes well of this in "An End or a Beginning":

> Ah, my beloved land
> Why don't you sing any more
> Can it be true that even the ropes of the Yellow River towmen
> Like sundered lute-strings
> Reverberate no more
> True that time, this dark mirror
> Has also turned its back on you forever
> Leaving only stars and drifting clouds behind

Sentimentality was one of the consequences of the deceptive promise of immediacy and purity in the new poetry. Poetry will always try to speak the difficult truths of the heart, and to break free of the tribe's clichés that involuntarily rise to the lips to take the place of everything that is hard to say. But a successful poetry recognizes that this process is a struggle, that such words do not come easily. As a culture acquires more history, credibly simple words seem more and more difficult to achieve; those beautifully simple phrases can only break through the cracks in poems, like the vegetation that grows only in the cracks of the mountains. When a poet achieves such a phrase or line, it seems like a miracle.

Such eruptions of simplicity are one thing. They occur in modern poetry, and when they occur, we honor them. But when a poet tries to write such words without having won them, without having earned the right to say them, we are in the presence of a pose. We have sentimentality. We wince. I wince when Bei Dao begins a poem:

> A perpetual stranger
> am I to the world

I thought I destroyed the only copy of that poem when I was 14, a year after I wrote it. I thought we all did. We destroyed it the moment we discovered the immense difference between writing and reading what we have written. Such sentimentality (or, perhaps, self-conscious posing) is, however, the disease of modern Chinese poetry, and a deception far deeper than all the stifling weight of the past in classical poetry. In modern China, it appears in political poetry and apolitical poetry alike. It appears a few times in the poems translated in Bei Dao's *The August Sleepwalker*. It may be a poet's single most important task to learn to avoid passages like the following from "Rainy Night":

> Even if tomorrow morning
> the muzzle and the bleeding sun
> make me surrender freedom youth and pen
> I will never surrender this evening
> I will never surrender you
> let walls stop up my mouth
> let iron bars divide my sky
> as long as my heart keeps pounding the blood will ebb and flow
> and your smile be imprinted on the crimson moon
> rising each night outside my small window
> recalling memories

or in "The Orange is Ripe":

> Let me into your heart
> to find my shattered dream

Despite these painful quotations, it is to Bei Dao's credit (and to Bonnie McDougall's) that *The August Sleepwalker* is freer of large doses of Nutrasweet than virtually any other modern Chinese poetry I have read. Bei Dao's talents, and McDougall's considerable skill as a translator, make these among the only translations of modern Chinese poetry that are not, by and large, embarrassing.

Bei Dao is one of a group of talented younger poets to rise out of the upheavals of the Cultural Revolution into the shaken and much changed China that followed. These new poets were considerably more daring in their images, and in their collocations of images, than were their predecessors. They also grew more daring in the topics that they took up and in the sentiments that they declared. Although Western readers of twentieth-century poetry may find little that is daring in their clusters of images and their sentiments, daring is a notoriously relative quality. In the context of the intense conservatism of Chinese literature, such poetry gave the kind of thrill that Western readers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century must have experienced in the birth of poetic modernism. (This comparison would be merely condescending if these poets were not seeking to produce precisely such a thrill, and to do so precisely on the model of modernist Western poetry.) The thrill of daring does not last long, to be sure; but after the smoke blows away, real poetry is often present. Although it is difficult to see Bei Dao and his contemporaries as "major" poets, there is real poetry here.

From another point of view as well, the work of Bei Dao and some of his contemporaries represents a welcome move in contemporary Chinese poetry, a move away from a narrowly defined and obvious version of political engagement. It is a great misfortune that the state's capacity for real brutality forces us to be interested in what is so inherently uninteresting. The scars of the state's brutality appear here and there as topics in the poems of *The August Sleepwalker*, and Bei Dao writes such poetry well (as in "An End or a Beginning"). Still, if there is heroism in Bei Dao's poetry, it is not in his overt opposition to a regime that is as ludicrous in its transparent lies as it is vicious in enforcing them. Such opposition is a political position that is, at the strongest, unsurprising. His heroism lies, rather, in his determination to find other aspects of human life and art that are worthy of a poet's attention.

To write something valuable that is not

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overtly and topically political is a small literary triumph in the People's Republic of China, though it is hardly remarkable in the context of our hypothetical world poetry. In her introduction, McDougall makes the wise and essential point that a truly apolitical poetry is impossible in such a highly politicized world, that an ostensibly apolitical poetry is itself a strong political statement. Bei Dao pays his political dues in the more conventional coinage, in poems that demonstrate his "political correctness" in opposing the regime. But he is also capable of more.

Western readers will generally welcome the apolitical dimension of Bei Dao's poetry as more perfectly representing the range a "world poet" should have. Yet an interesting problem arises here. Chinese readers of "new poetry" with whom I have spoken tend to admire Bei Dao's earlier, more engaged political poetry, and they tend to deplore his turn away from politics to more private concerns. Who decides what is valuable, what is a good tendency, in a poet's work—the Western reader or the Chinese reader? Whose stamp of approval carries more weight? Scholars of modern Chinese literature often object to the imposition of Western criteria of literary judgment on Chinese literature. It is a wise caution. But is this Chinese literature, or literature that began in the Chinese language? For what imaginary audience has this poetry been written?

Success in creating a "world poetry" is not without its costs. Bei Dao has, by and large, written international poetry. Local color is used, but sparsely. Nor is such truly international poetry merely the achievement of the translator, as skillful as she is: most of these poems translate themselves. These could just as easily be translations from a Slovak or an Estonian or a Philippine poet. It could even be a kind of American poetry, though in this final hypothesis a question arises that must trouble us. If this had been an American poet writing in English, would this book have been published, and by a prestigious press? We must wonder if such collections of poetry in translation become publishable only because the publisher and the readership have been assured that the poetry was lost in translation. But what if the poetry wasn't lost in translation? What if this is it?

This *is* it. The poetry of *The August Sleepwalker* is a poetry written to travel well, and it declares the fact proudly, as in "True":

> Spring has no nationality,
> Clouds are citizens of the world.
>
> Become friends again with mankind,
> My song.

This may aspire to be an international poetry that sails over boundaries, but it does have local origins, origins that are not Chinese: the apostrophe to one's own personified poem, "my song," is as alien to traditional Chinese poetry as it is familiar in the Western poetic tradition. And yet this figure of the international poem as a cloud is a well-chosen one. Bei Dao's poems are often just such shapes in aerial motion: passing for a moment into some impossibly beautiful intricacy, then becoming mere puff. It is a new poetry; its way is uncharted. It blunders and sometimes finds real beauty. It is a blind man's motion, and the song-cloud moving across spaces without frontiers can easily undergo a visual metamorphosis of shape into the writing hand that moves across the blank paper, making figures but leaving no trace, as in "Expectation":

> a blind man gropes his way
> my hand moves over
> the blank paper, leaving nothing behind
> I am moving
> I am the blind man

In another metamorphosis of the image, the song-cloud, international traveler, and page of white paper can become the flight of a white crane, which is the traditional Chinese figure of immortality:

> what do you want to exchange with me
> the white crane unfolds a sheet of drifting
> paper
> on it is written your answer
> but I know nothing at all

When Bei Dao's poetry succeeds—and sometimes it succeeds wonderfully—it does so not by words, which are always trapped within the nationality of language and its borders, but by the envisagements of images possible only with words. McDougall also suggests this in her introduction. This is a possible solution to what a world poetry might be, a way of writing poetry that is essentially translatable. (Hegel believed that all poetry could be translated without loss, because its true medium was not words but "poetic ideas.") Keeping in mind the image of the poem as a cloud blown by the wind, we might consider an example of one of Bei Dao's successes, the final stanza of the opening poem "Hello, Baihua Mountain":

> It was a wind within a wind, drawing
> A restless response from the land,
> I whispered, and the snowflake
> Drifted from my hand down the abyss.

His whisper is a small wind within the larger wind blowing in the surrounding world. The song-cloud that issued from the poet's lips undergoes yet another metamorphosis and becomes a snow-

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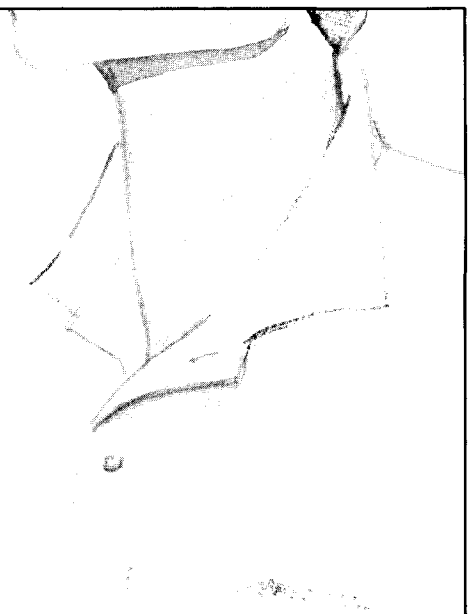

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flake in the hand, caught and carried by the wind of a poet's whisper and blown into an abyss, where there are no margins and no frontiers. This may be a darker and more frightening vision of the truly international poem. National poetry had a history and a landscape; the shape of the poem was more or less fixed and defined by its place in such a topography. The international poem, by contrast, is an intricate shape on a blank background without frontiers, a shape that undergoes metamorphoses. It achieves moments of beauty, but it does not have a history, nor is it capable of leaving a trace that might constitute a history:

> the book lying open on the table
> makes a rustling noise, like
> the sound of a fire
> or fan-like wings
> gorgeously opening, flame and bird
> together
> in the space above the abyss

The poem is always in passage, the book that is flame and bird.

McDougall observes of Bei Dao's poetry that "the language on the whole does not rely heavily on word patterns, a particular vocabulary, or special musical effects." In the passage above, the book that hovers like a bird above the abyss is a brilliant image in the translatable sense. The image in itself would probably have beauty in almost any language. McDougall, however, has translated this world poetry of fungible images into true English poetry, which does indeed rely heavily on word patterns, on a particular vocabulary, and on musical effects (not to mention several loud echoes of Anglo-American poetry). Any English reader who reads the passage above out loud should recognize a real mastery of this language, which is a mastery of particular words and their placement. We smile reading it, and our smiles are no more for the image itself than for the way in which the image is embedded in the rhythms, in the placement of caesuras, and in the particular choice and arrangement of words.

It is only fair to offer this instance, when the poet's brilliant image meets the translator's magical touch for her own language, to counterbalance a further and troubling aspect of this new world poetry, which is the power and the consequences of the approval of the international audience, that is, the Western audience. I have in mind the way in which the attention of a Western audience is a function of successful advertising. Bei Dao is a well-known contemporary poet in China, but he is by no means pre-eminent. By writing a supremely translatable poetry, by the good fortune of a gifted translator and publicist, he may well attain in the West the absolute pre-eminence among contemporary Chinese poets that he cannot quite attain in China itself. And the very fact of wide foreign (Western) recognition could, in turn, grant him pre-eminence in China. Thus we would have the strange phenomenon of a poet who became the leading poet in his own country because he translated well.

The international audience admires the poetry, imagining what it might be if the poetry had not been lost in translation. And the audience at home admires the poetry, knowing how much it is appreciated internationally, in translation. Welcome to the late twentieth century. •

The Saving Remnant

BY CHRISTOPHER LASCH

The Feeling Intellect: Selected Writings by Philip Rieff edited with an introduction by Jonathan B. Imber

(University of Chicago Press, 416 pp., $55, $19.95 paper)

"Why publish?" Philip Rieff asked himself not long ago. "With so many authors, who remains behind to read?" Almost twenty years have passed since Rieff brought out his last book, *Fellow Teachers*; evidently he meant what he said when he urged authors to file away their best ideas instead of adding to the "babel of criticism" that threatens to deafen us all. If others exercised the same self-restraint, we might have less reason to regret it in Rieff. Since there is little hope that his example will become contagious, however, it is a good thing that Jonathan Imber, a former student and now a teacher of sociological theory at Wellesley College, has given us this anthology of Rieff's uncollected essays to set against the rising flood of books that continue to clamor for ill-deserved attention. We need this book at a time when we are besieged by lesser books—books announcing breathtaking methodological and conceptual breakthroughs, recycling old ideas in new jargon, rediscovering the obvious, refusing to acknowledge any predecessors or worse, betraying no awareness of their existences.

Readers who have not yet made Rieff's acquaintance will find in this collection something of what makes him indispensable, and will be led to read not only *Fellow Teachers* (1973), but also his earlier books, *Freud: The Mind of the Moralist* (1959) and *The Triumph of the Therapeutic* (1966). Those who already admired him will find that their admiration was not misplaced. These essays reveal an intelligence at once biting and unfailingly courteous; generous to adversaries and demanding of allies; solemn and playful; pessimistic and hopeful.

According to Rieff, the collapse of religion, its replacement by the remorselessly analytic and critical sensibility exemplified by Freud, and the degeneration of the "analytic attitude" into an all-out assault on ideals of every kind—an impulse to drag everything lofty into the dust—have left our culture in a sorry state. He does not expect immediate improvement, nor does he advance a program of cultural renovation, but he seldom speaks in the voice of doom and despair. Bad as things are, he thinks it is still possible to make a modest contribution to the cause of truth and justice. It is possible, for instance, to find honorable employment as a teacher, provided that teachers do not give in to the temptation to become "armchair prophets." The university, notwithstanding its present disarray, is a "sacred institution," and teachers can set an example for others if they approach their calling in a spirit of reverence.

A certain ambiguity lurks in this exalted conception of the intellectual life. Is it the teacher's calling itself that is sacred, or the culture historically preserved in the university? Rieff is at his best when he leans to the first of these positions, when he argues that the office of the devoted teacher is not to deify or even defend a "dying culture" but to resist the "downward identification" that threatens any form of culture at all. His advice to teachers, which consists largely of negative commandments, reflects his belief that intellectuals betray their vocation when they give in to the

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temptation to become gurus or entertainers. Avoid "idea-mongering," the "marketing of positions." Refuse to join the ranks of "public men"—intellectual entrepreneurs and celebrities. "Abjure prophecy."

It is fitting that Rieff addresses his fellow teachers so largely in terms of "what is not to be done." The heart of any culture, as he sees it, lies in its "interdictions." Culture is a set of moral demands, of "deeply graven interdicts, etched in superior and trustworthy characters." This is why Rieff can describe the United States today as a "cultureless society." It is a society in which nothing is sacred, and nothing, therefore, can be effectively forbidden. An anthropologist might take the position that a cultureless society is a contradiction in terms, but Rieff objects to the way in which social scientists have reduced the concept of culture to a "way of life." In his view, culture is a way of life backed up by the will to condemn and punish those who defy its commandments. A "way of life" is not enough. A people's way of life has to be embedded in "sacred order"—that is, in a conception of the universe, ultimately a religious conception, that tells us "what is not to be done."

Those who regard tolerance as the supreme virtue, and who confuse love with permissiveness, will find these propositions forbidding, if they bother to read Rieff at all. But if they allow themselves to be drawn into his argument, if they suspend their prejudice against unduly "judgmental" procedures and policies—against the very concept of punishment—they will come to see the justice of his deliberately provocative assertion that "repression is truth." Every culture has to narrow the range of choices in some way, however arbitrary such limitations may seem. To be sure, it also has to see to it that its controls do not reach too far into people's private lives. Still, if it allows every impulse a public expression—if it boldly declares that "it is forbidden to forbid," in the revolutionary slogan of 1968—then it not only invites anarchy, but abolishes the "sacred distances" on which the category of truth finally depends. When every expression is equally permissible, nothing is true. "By the creation of opposing . . . ideals, of militant truths, a seal is fastened upon the terrific capacity of man to express everything." Such is the burden of Rieff's argument, his indictment of modern society.

His unfashionably "maximal" definition of culture, advanced in opposition to the minimal definition favored by anthropologists and other sociologists, results in a sweeping condemnation of the American way of life; but it also offers a ray of hope. If Rieff is correct in his contention that culture rests on willingness to forbid, then a "remissive" culture like our own cannot be expected to survive indefinitely. Sooner or later our remissive elites will have to rediscover the principle of limitation.

The modern project, that is, may have run its course. The "idea that men need not submit to any power . . . other than their own" is by no means discredited, but it is losing its capacity to inspire heady visions of progress. In the face of accumulating evidence to the contrary, it is more and more difficult to believe that modern men "are becoming gods." The therapeutic movement, moreover, has "not yet penetrated deep down" into the class structure. In *Fellow Teachers*, Rieff cites the persistence of old-fashioned moralities among the "less educated" as "another reason for hope." The masses' resistance to the "religion of criticism" enables us to "hope for a renaissance of guilt."

Optimism about our prospects would be foolish—even more foolish in 1990 than it was in 1973. Modernity may be drawing to an end, as Rieff suggested almost a decade ago, but the postmodern sensibility that claims to replace it is not an improvement. Still, Rieff's appeal for patience and hope continues to serve as a useful corrective to apocalyptic discouragement. "We can only have faith and wait; and see."

Over the years, Rieff has written on a remarkable variety of subjects. Imber's collection shows the range of his interests. In addition to work on Freud and the emergence of "psychological man," it contains essays on Disraeli, Orwell, Oscar Wilde, Charles Horton Cooley (Rieff's favorite among American sociologists), the sociologist Kelly Miller, the Oppenheimer case, and many other matters, all treated with intelligence, flair, and often with a good deal of humor. But Rieff's central preoccupations—the displacement of religion by therapy, the conflict between moral and aesthetic attitudes toward experience, the "hypertrophy of criticism, by which the character disorder of psychologizing intellectuals is best diagnosed"—seldom recede very far from view.

Thus, the point of his essay on Oppenheimer (1969) is that both Oppenheimer and his detractors accepted a therapeutic frame of reference. Instead of debating Oppenheimer's record on its political merits, they argued about

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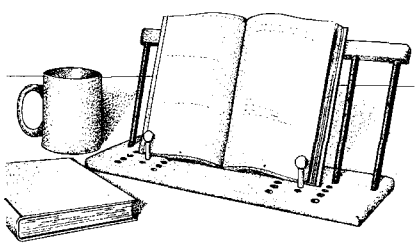

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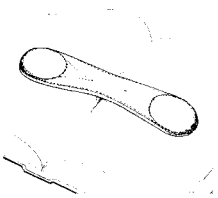

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whether his association with Communists exposed psychological flaws that should disqualify him from public service. His essay on Disraeli (1952) argues that Disraeli (like Freud) refused to disclaim his Jewish heritage and thus escaped the "ultimate risk" (as Rieff says elsewhere in connection with Freud) of "cutting himself off from the devout practice of its creed." Something of the same idea informs his essay on Orwell (1954), another intellectual who lost his religion but managed to keep up the "essential Christian action of brotherliness and compassion." Modernism continues to live off the capital of the creeds it has rejected, and the most admirable among modernist intellectuals, in Rieff's view, have always been aware of this dependence—even when, like Freud, they were urging their readers to outgrow it.

Rieff's point of view has remained quite consistent over the years. Yet both the tone and the substance of his work have undergone a subtle change. In the '50s and '60s he wrote as a public intellectual, for an audience of general readers who presumably shared a common vocabulary and a common frame of reference. Many of his essays appeared in general magazines like *Commentary*, *Encounter*, and *Partisan Review*. His books were published by houses prominent in the commercial trade. Even when he wrote for scholarly journals, Rieff's prose exemplified the analytic, critical attitude that he recommended (in spite of his awareness of its disintegrating effect on traditional beliefs) as the only attitude available to intellectuals living in a world "spent of sacred forces."

His early essays were informed by an ideal of "committed" scholarship, "passionate subjectivity." He praised Anders Nygren's *Agape and Eros*, in 1954, as an "exemplary case of committed history, partial and yet thorough in the exhibition of the other side." He quarreled with Hannah Arendt's *Origins of Totalitarianism* but commended the author's "prophetic intention." "Better a creative error than the uncreative truth." He deplored the "German disease" in scholarship, inveighed against footnotes, and found virtue in unobtrusive erudition. In a review in 1952 of John T. McNeill's *History of the Cure of Souls*, he wrote that "McNeill has the final, moral virtue of the historian ... he is not neutral."

Between *The Triumph of the Therapeutic* and *Fellow Teachers*, however, there is a significant shift in Rieff's tone. In the later work, he warns against "play-acting of the prophetic role" and urges "objectivity." He no longer writes as a public intellectual or addresses himself to the "general readership" that he was addressing, in his own words, in 1951. He insists that "it is our duty, as teachers, not to be public men." The public has ceased to exist for Rieff. There is only a literary market, dominated by the traffic in cultural entertainments (which include "criticism" and "prophecy"). Communication even with fellow teachers is beset with misunderstanding.

Fellow Teachers took the form of an open letter to Robert Boyers and Robert Orrill, the editors of *Salmagundi*, who had invited Rieff to submit to a public interview at Skidmore College. "Is it possible," Rieff asks, "that my invitation to come to Skidmore ... was based upon a happy misunderstanding? Did you imagine that I am a herald of the therapeutic?" He is "neither for nor against" a therapeutic culture, Rieff asserts. He is a "scholar-teacher of sociological theory." The disclaimer is not very convincing, but it is symptomatic of a change in the intellectual climate that Rieff feels obliged to make it. It is likewise significant that he rejects a public interview, on the grounds that it cannot serve to transmit the kind of "privileged knowledge" teachers pass on to their students. Instead of engaging in public exchange, intellectuals who are serious about their work need to withdraw into their "academic enclaves" and to encourage the "slower understanding" of the classroom. The forum is a place only for theatrics.

For many intellectuals of integrity, the cultural revolution of the late '60s, so called, discredited the idea of "committed" public scholarship. The concept of the public became indistinguishable from the phenomenon of publicity. Under these circumstances, Rieff's decision to write less, to publish with university presses and scholarly journals, and to devote his energies to "strengthening our enclaves" can hardly be condemned. Still, he has paid a certain price for his strategic withdrawal. Not that he has succumbed to the "German disease." Just the reverse: his writing has become not more academic but more oracular, more "prophetic" the more he warns against the prophetic role.

In his early work, Rieff spoke with force and conviction but always in a direct, candid, unaffected tone of voice. Now he prefers to speak, much of the time, in cryptic aphorisms, paradoxes, and double meanings. He himself refers to his characteristic tone as "guarded." He writes too many footnotes—not pedantic bibliographical footnotes, to be sure, but long expository asides that seem to betray an unwillingness to engage the reader more directly. His writing has become, by design, less accessible and at the same time more portentous and apocalyptic, even though Rieff is constantly warning himself against these very pitfalls.

Now that the public arena seems to have been irreversibly corrupted by the aggressive marketing of ideas, the decision to think of oneself as a teacher rather than a public intellectual is one that many others besides Rieff have reluctantly made. In Rieff's case, it seems to be associated with a substantive change in his thought—a new emphasis on the university as a "sacred institution," in which "privileged knowledge" is stored and "guardedly" transmitted. This view of the life of the mind strikes me as inconsistent with Rieff's observation that the worst way to defend culture is to deify it.

It is also inconsistent with his contention that modern intellectuals should not aspire to become successors of the clergy. It tends to make a religion out of culture—something Rieff condemned in his earlier work, particularly in the splendid chapter on religion in *The Mind of the Moralist*. Freud's attack on religion, Rieff pointed out, rested on a "misunderstanding of religion itself as social." Like Kant, Freud saw religion as the "solemn air of sanctity" (in Freud's words) that gave moral duty the status of divine commands and thus perpetuated the "laws of culture."

But religion is not culture, and the best interpreters of Christianity, as Rieff pointed out, have always distinguished "between faith and the institutions and attitudes by which it is transmitted at any given time." Thus Kierkegaard "diagnosed the malaise of the nineteenth century" as the "confusion between religion and culture," Christ and Christendom. Freud, on the other hand, "assumed religion to be conformist," as if its only function was to guarantee social order. For him "Christianity meant always the church, a repressive social institution"—not the prophetic tradition, which exposed the corruption of the church and accused Christians of identifying God's purposes with their own. Freud lost sight of the difference between "prophetic denunciation" and "civic submission," according to Rieff.

In *The Future of an Illusion*, Freud posed the question of whether society could get along without religion in the form of an imaginary dialogue. His interlocutor em-

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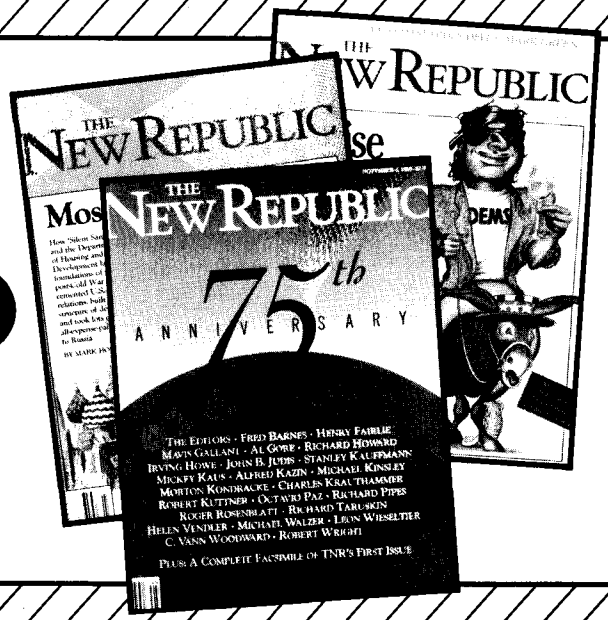
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phasizes the "practical" value of religion in enforcing morality. He concedes that religion is a "hoax" but defends its necessity "for the protection of culture." Freud himself believed that men and women could now dispense with religion; but the important point is that he posed the question in this way. It was the wrong question, as Rieff makes clear. The issue is not whether religion is necessary, but whether it is true. Since the publication of *Fellow Teachers*, however, Rieff has begun to sound more and more like Freud's interlocutor, defending religion as the necessary source of social order.

It takes nothing away from the dignity of the academic calling to remind ourselves that the university is not a sacred institution, and that God, not culture, is the only appropriate object of unconditional reverence and wonder. Culture may well depend on religion (Freud's contrary view notwithstanding), but religion has no meaning if it is seen merely as a prop of culture. Unless it rests on a disinterested love of being in general, religious faith serves only to clothe human purposes with a spurious air of sanctity. This is why an honest atheist is always to be preferred to a culture-Christian.

Freud and Weber, Rieff's masters and models, were admirable in their determination to live without this particular form of consolation—without the illusion that human purposes coincide with those of the Almighty. Precisely the same illusion, however, has always been the principal target of religious prophecy. Indeed, it is their common enmity to the cultural pretensions of pious folk that reveals the kinship between the prophetic tradition and the exemplary tradition of secular intellectuals like Freud and Weber.

Rieff belongs to this tradition too, except when he forgets himself and identifies a sense of the sacred too closely with institutions and the "interdictions" they enforce. We need institutions and interdictions, God knows. But they are not, themselves, sacred. Nothing but confusion, as Luther and Calvin pointed out a long time ago—and as Rieff has reminded us on many occasions—comes from equating faith with submission to the moral laws that mankind makes for its own governance. Submission to the laws is usually a virtue, but it is not the same thing as faith.

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Adventure Capitalism

BY JONATHAN RIEDER

Getting Paid: Youth, Crime and Work in the Inner City by Mercer L. Sullivan

(Cornell University Press, 275 pp., $37.95, $12.95 paper)

The Cocaine Kids: The Inside Story of a Teenage Drug Ring by Terry Williams

(Addison-Wesley, 154 pp., $16.95, $7.95 paper)

Seductions of Crime: Moral and Sensual Attractions in Doing Evil by Jack Katz

(Basic Books, 384 pp., $19.95, $10.95 paper)

It is a poignant but inescapable fact that the urban poor in America are their own worst enemies and advocates. Beset by forces that threaten their survival and their dignity, many manage to survive with dignity. Others succumb, however, to criminal behavior that endangers not only society at large but their own families and communities. It is worth recalling that when Bernhard Goetz shot four black youths on the subway, countless black people, including many neighbors of the victims, cheered the action. Unconstrained by visions of political correctness, by the embarrassment of seeming racist, or by sentimentality, they understood the long-standing truth that crack and automatic weapons have only amplified: that crime, no less than economic inequality, threatens civil liberties. Formal rights without the substantive ability to enjoy them are fictions. Criminals deprive us of the public spaces that give meaning to urban life, of our basic rights of movement, assembly, and speech. And now more than ever criminals rob children of any semblance of childhood.

Conservatives have understood this more viscerally than liberals have. True, those on the right have often demagogically emphasized the lurid details of crime, and their moralistic stance toward criminals has often been tainted by mean-spirited and racist sentiments. But there is more to conservative passion than vindictiveness. There is also the spirit to confront the tangible realities of crime. It marks a vital connection to the moral emotion of indignation. The demand that criminals be punished for wrongdoing implies, after all, a certain respectfulness, since it suggests that they, too, are moral agents, capable of personal responsibility.

Liberals have tended to shrink from the immediacy of crime, from the terror of its victims, from the evil of its practitioners. They have sought to dampen feelings of indignation, to maintain a genteel decorousness about venting them in public. Michael Dukakis's eerie detachment in his response to the famous hypothetical question about the rape of his wife only exaggerated this stance of ethical and emotional dissociation. None of this denies the vast contributions that liberals have made to the discussion of crime: their attention to the conditions that promote crime, their concern for the rights of the accused, their desire to restrain the passions raised by fear of crime. It merely underscores one consequence of this liberal flight into comforting abstraction: the alienation of a good deal of American liberalism from the wellsprings of communal experience, morality, and sentiment. Another consequence, ironically, has been the dehumanization of the criminal poor. By diminishing responsibility, some on the left treat the poor mechanistically, as the mere objects of impersonal forces.

It is probably a mistake to burden the individual with too much or too little responsibility in these matters. The elusive character of crime defies the twin simplifications of moralism and mechanism. What we need instead are clear-eyed depictions of criminals that can illuminate

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their experience in all its subtlety and density. For a while, such gritty reportage was hard to come by. The tradition of naturalistic urban ethnography that culminated in the 1960s went into eclipse at precisely the moment when a new devastation of the ghetto family and community was gathering force. But now there are signs of a renaissance of the impulse to encounter the urban poor, and the criminals among them, close up.

Terry Williams's *The Cocaine Kids* is part of this development. His spare, matter-of-fact style and his gentle, street-wise presence make for deft portraiture of the Dominican crack crew with whom he logged some five years in the Washington Heights section of Manhattan. The teenagers who man the lower levels of crack distribution inhabit an exotic world, with its own mysteries and lingo; but Squib, Chilly, and Kitty are really not so exotic after all. They aspire to the good life, and the wages of dishwashers, fast-food cashiers, and messengers cannot compete with the "crazy dollars" of drug peddling. How else is Masterrap going to raise the capital to launch his recording career? And in the milieu in which they are making career decisions, hustling comes naturally; "All the kids out here be scramblin. It's a way of life. If you need some money, you start scramblin."

Whatever our febrile images of crack addicts, the kids who minister to their demand have a goodly amount of the bourgeois virtues. Max, the crew's leader, would not settle for handouts. "As in any business, Max worked his way by impressing a superior." He showed up one day not in a baby Benz, but in the big Benz. "I had to convince people I could do it. I didn't have my hand out for no charity. I worked hard to get established." The kids draw a sharp moral boundary between cocaine users and crack-heads. They disdain the latter's lack of self-control, their immersion in compulsive pleasure. Adorned in gold chains, Masterrap rejects the Dionysian ethos of his "crimey," or partner:

> I know better. I think making money is OK, but not making it just by dealing. You gotta go legit, at least for a minute. You gotta go state of fresh, all the way live, if you wanna do anything worthwhile out here. Everybody thinks they can make crazy dollars, but they confused. It ain't like that. I've seen cocaine bust many a head—they get fucked up and be clocking out after they find out they cannot find the key to understanding the mystery of skied [being stoned]. I say skied. But you know what? But-but-but you know what? They don't have a clue. Word.

The requirements of selling crack impose their own discipline on the sellers. To get repeat business, street dealers must establish a reputation for good product, retain access to consignments, develop a strategy to avoid arrests and robberies. These tasks require an extended time horizon, and the boys are encouraged by a job ladder that holds out the promise of mobility: with enough business acumen, a kid can move up and get behind the scale. As Williams notes, "A kid who can routinely handle money, control personal use of cocaine, deal with buyers, and control a weapon, may make it out of the street and into the elite world of the super dealer."

Dealing, in other words, mimics and mirrors respectable life in countless ways. In Williams's telling, the merchants of crack are essentially merchants. Still, it is hard not to wonder if this portrait owes something to Williams's sympathetic personality as well as to the kids' actual "normality." At every point, he hastens to reassure us that the kids are like us, that "the kids live in flux, with the day-to-day troubles, the sorrows and expectations, of any adolescents." The diminutive phrase "the kids" is itself a sly, if unwitting, argument; proclaiming the innocence of youth, it seeks to minimize distance. This impulse follows from a moral desire to consecrate the kids, to make us feel for the vulnerability beneath their surface hardness, but it also draws force from a sociological view of crime as an adaptive response to blocked opportunity in a culture that enshrines material success.

These two impulses, the moral and the sociological, have always been entangled in liberal scholarship and politics. They have helped to parry the pernicious influence of social Darwinism and atomistic individualism, the founts of the tendency to blame the victim. This fusion of optimism and naturalism remains an enduring contribution to American political culture. By insisting that immigrant criminals shared the American commitment to the value of achievement, but merely lacked the opportunity to realize it, sociologists like Robert Merton reclaimed the criminals as members, perhaps misguided, of the civic community. As Robert Warshow put it, the gangster suffered not from too little Americanism but from too much. His silk shirts, like the gold ornamentation of today's dealers, do not transgress what we hold dear, they perversely flaunt it.

In the hands of the less conceptually agile, however, this sensible emphasis on the power of circumstance to tempt even the most virtuous to transgress has long posed certain problems. At its most maudlin, say, when invoked by insufficiently savvy do-gooders and social workers, the theory tends to encourage a gullibility that juvenile delinquents are quick to exploit. ("Officer Krupke, I've got a social disease.") Indiscriminate cries of racism have become a variation on this basic plea for moral immunity. Therapeutic ideology and sociological jurisprudence can easily mask moral irresponsibility.

Arguments that highlight the social determinants of crime have another problem: they fail to discriminate very

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finely. Most poor people do not become criminals. Only a small percentage of those who do take that route engage in the truly predatory conduct that threatens civilized life. Historically, some people whose mobility is blocked have been willing to work long hours at low wages, others have not. A lot of kids even in stable working-class ethnic neighborhoods do a lot of drugs and headbusting, and plenty of upper-middle- and upper-class people have decadent values. Finally, the theory doesn't account for the fluctuating nature of criminal careers, for the predominance of adolescents in street crime, for the way poor people shift about among legitimate, illicit, and underground economies in response to opportunities and their lack.

In *Getting Paid*, Mercer Sullivan takes heed of these complexities in the theory of blocked opportunity. As he surveys the career decisions of youthful criminals, the structures that count are a good deal more concrete and provincial than the vast ones of class, oppression, and racism: the job connections your family can supply; the kinds of companies that are fair pickings in your neighborhood (if you live near warehouses, things "fall off the truck"); the changing spending needs of adolescents at different ages; the moral climate in your neighborhood (lots of street crime around high-rise projects, little street crime in white ethnic neighborhoods); the kind of technical expertise about crime that your clique makes available to you.

Sullivan's study lacks the humanizing texture of *The Cocaine Kids*, but what Sullivan loses in narrative vitality he gains in analytic precision. He humanizes in a different fashion. Comparing criminal cliques of poor blacks and Hispanics and white working-class youths, he is able to show just how much they have in common. In all three groups, the kids began to engage in crime in their early teens, mainly for thrills. All three grow up with experience in street fighting, and criminal violence stems naturally from it. As the teenagers get older, the cash requirements of hanging out rise, and to satisfy them the kids look for jobs, but none ventures far from the neighborhood. Kids in all three groups develop their hunches about the particular risks and opportunities of crime on their turf: the neighborhood channels white ethnic kids toward organized crime, black kids toward muggings and chain-snatching, Hispanic kids toward burglary.

And yet these similarities are not strong enough to keep the kids from very different economic destinations, and here lies the power of Sullivan's comparisons. It might be that the blacks from Projectville are too immersed in ghetto culture to make it, but the white working-class kids have even lower aspirations and less respect for education than do the blacks, and their work habits are hardly exemplary. Still, virtually all the whites have family and neighborhood connections that they can translate into stable and decent-paying jobs, and a vigilant neighborhood to keep them on the straight and narrow path. The blacks of Projectville, by contrast, don't have those connections, the lack of stores around the projects means a lack of local jobs, and the anonymity of the projects is an invitation to street robberies. Indeed, moral bonds and social control are so frayed in the black projects that young hoodlums rip off their neighbors without compunction. As a result, kids who begin to dabble in drugs and mugging end up with sustained involvement in high-risk, low-return theft as a primary source of income.

Even among the black and Puerto Rican poor, the costs of crime take their toll. At first young adolescents continue their tentative exploration of crime because they find it a cost-free way to produce cash. Gradually, however, most shift from theft and violence back to wages, as the penalties of arrest and resistance mount. Sky Wilson, a black dealer, was mindful of the fate of the Invader, who at the age of 18 had a big posse working for him and three Mercedes. "He was dead before he was 21. I don't want to make it like that. . . . I'm a hustler, not a gangster. But like an older brother told me, 'You live by the sword, you die by the sword.' " The good news is that for most of these petty criminals, deterrence works. They leave mugging behind as a youthful enthusiasm, and find their way back to the legal job market. The bad news is that the small number who persist, especially in predatory crime, are street-hardened toughs.

These depictions of criminality have an oddly reassuring quality. Against our daily experience of urban fear and occasional terror, they underscore the pedestrian quality of much of crime. The criminal activity of ghetto youths is largely the endeavor of reasonable folks. And yet there may be something

Burning The Flags

A one-armed boy crouches in gutter mud,
scooping an ochre lump with a tin can
on the hot street, where nothing but exhaust
rises in the faint wind, where nothing flies.

They're burning the flag of the Serengeti
They're burning the flag of the Amazon

The honor guard gets lost in the mausoleum,
letting out yelps at glass cases of bones,
gems in eye-sockets. During a funeral,
they tangle the flag above a sergeant's coffin.

They're burning the flag of the Parthenon
They're burning the banner of the Himalayas

The toy standard-bearer of the Union
hoists a blue plastic tab upon a bridge
of papier-mâché, a plume of cotton bursting
from a lead cannon toward ranks of figurines.

They're burning the streamers of the Black Forest
They're burning the colors of the Dead Sea

The boy socks a Clorox bottle tethered
to a street sign, punching as his sleeve flaps.
Downhill, a decal's peeling on the cracked
windshield of a truck, stripes bleached out, stars clear.

They're burning the guidon of the Great Barrier Reef
They're burning the ensign of the Everglades
They're burning the fabric, they're burning the flags
of forest, oxygen, breath, and flags

JOHN DRURY

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too pat in this characterization. It is true that the vernacular ideal of "getting paid"—street slang for committing crime, as in "let's go get paid"—resembles, and thus pays homage to, traditional norms of earning and working. But when said preparatory to a mugging, it obviously has a more deviant, ironic twist. The same drift can be seen in that New York saying, Manhattan makes and Brooklyn takes. There is a contemptuous edge, a culturally sanctioned delight, that all talk of rational strategy and blocked mobility and shared aspirations fails to capture.

The studied downplaying of this demonic face of crime is clear in the way that Williams soft-pedals the nihilism of the world in which "the kids" operate. Wandering through a crackhouse, he keeps to his stance of detached, cinema verité neutrality. This empathy amounts to a kind of relativism. It does more than sanitize the degradation that unfolds there; it sanitizes the larger crack world that the kids not only inhabit but sustain. That world includes drive-by shootings, the heedless spread of AIDS, wards of crack babies, children murdered in the spray of a machine gun. To ignore all this has the force of blunting the kids' contribution to the destruction of families and communities, which parallels the kids' own blunted affect, their restrictive imaginative and emotional range. Williams may be right not to make this the centerpiece of his account, but surely it has some effect on "the kids," and on the inner meaning of their work.

Too labored an insistence on the equivalence between criminals and the mainstream has clear limits as well as virtues. To say that crime is an illicit means to a conventional end downplays the difficulty of separating the two in human consciousness, for the meaning of the end depends mightily on the means that bring it into being. Whatever the analogies between "mainstream" behavior and crime, the latter has devastating, hardly conventional consequences. Similarly, the focus on a common hunger for material success in isolation from all the other counterthemes in the lives of ghetto criminals reflects an artificial notion of equivalence that ignores the reality of the streets and the thugs who often prevail there.

This is another way of saying that despite the rich truths of the liberal notion of crime, the vision of shared humanity that it implies partly derives from an essentially sentimental streak in liberalism. As Jack Katz observes in *Seductions of Crime*:

> By what anthropological theory can one hold his real self somehow outside the cynical hustles he devises day by day, his soul, untouched by a constant pursuit of illicit action, waiting with confident innocence in some purgatory to emerge when a fair opportunity materializes?

However many nascent Horatio Algers there are hawking crack and amassing capital on upper Broadway, there are far more ruthless aspects of underclass life that the motivations of displaced entrepreneurial zeal and cost-benefit analysis do not quite exhaust. The pages of Katz's book are crowded with these brutalities, and with the Uzi-toting, gang-banging, wolf-packing badboys who perpetrate them. The protagonists of Katz's story are sadistic toughs, "badasses," as he calls them, who revel in their ultra "bad" otherness.

"Background" has something to do with this fearsome conduct, but as all the poor people who are tormented by "badasses" could tell you, you do not get from poverty and racism to wilding and Willie Horton in one mechanistic swoop. At least the aspects of criminality that concern Katz cannot be accounted for in such deterministic terms. For one thing, these predators are not pushed reluctantly toward crime, in compensation for the respectable pursuits for which they lack opportunity; they positively relish and celebrate doing evil. For another, in strict cost-benefit terms, it is rational for armed robbers to flee the scene when a victim resists. But against all shrewdness, that is often precisely when a tough will choose to assert his sense of indomitable will, the utterly defiant disregard for what is prudent that is the essence of being bad. Criminals not only accrue rewards from, they also build identities around, doing evil. Katz's immense contribution is to force us to dwell on the foreground, on the lived experience, of all manner of fierce malefactors—"bad niggers," Italian "wiseguys," Chicano "cholos." The result of this break with sociological common sense is profoundly disturbing.

An array of urban rites, which Katz describes under the rubric of "mindfucking," betrays the studied effort of toughs to transcend rationality. In "whachulookinat," the badass sets up a situation in which the nervous answer "nothing" is fraught with ambiguity and invites the badass to respond with feigned victimization: "You calling me nothing?" Badasses do not seek physical dominance; that they could achieve without the convoluted word games or gratuitous meanness. Rather, the badass wants to show that he controls the meaning of the situation. He seeks to affirm his moral superiority. One gang achieves this thrilling effect when wolfpacking, asking for but really demanding money—"Hey man, give me a dime"—and then raising the ante if the booty is produced, until the individual refuses.

This is close to the situation that Goetz found himself in on the subway. Goetz may have been crazy, but he clearly had a better interpretive theory than all the respectable people who transfigured him into a symbol of racism. When his soon-to-be victims asked, "How are you?" Goetz knew the query was not innocent, that the form of politesse was a mockery of the meaning of civility. Goetz recognized that he was being drawn into a ritualized exchange, the aim of which was to intimidate and to humiliate him. He recalled, "I know in my mind they wanted to play with me . . . like a cat plays with a mouse." He also knew that in the dicey world of the New York subways, a streetwise anticipation of attack, even if it flies in the face of strict rules of evidence and a legal presumption of innocence, is a less risky guide to people's intentions and one's own survival. Who wants to wait, after all, until the culprit is proved guilty?

Nobody realizes this transcendent ideal of being bad, according to Katz, better than the perennial armed robber. Unlike muggers, who blindside you and exploit your surprise, stickup artists brave the risks of uncertainty by declaring their identity forthrightly: "This is a stickup." More than a brutal collision of bodies, a robbery is no easy feat to pull off continually, and the average criminal simply doesn't have the heart for it. You can only surmount the unpredictability of it all by becoming a "hardman." The drama turns around matters of self and dominance, not cash. Betraying a certain Maileresque romanticism, Katz argues that the pleasure comes from a "gut-deep desire to impose this hard control on close personal relationships. . . . It . . . seems to make sense only as part of a larger project of transcending chaos in general . . . through imposing a cold, hard, violent discipline."

Katz, it turns out, also fancies himself something of a badass. Uncowed by any polite fear of saying loudly what many would be too skittish to say, he argues that even when you compare poor African-Americans with other poor Hispanics and poor whites, African-American men still commit armed robbery at a disproportionate rate. Class or blocked mobility clearly cannot explain this exceptionalism. Katz's answer is that a stickup enacts a distinctive way of being male and black, a way of life that is bound

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What are the facts?

■ The concept of "land for peace" is a totally new one in the history of the world. It was formulated for one specific purpose only, namely to persuade and pressure Israel to give up territories that it has administered since the Six-Day War of 1967. By its victory in that war, Israel wound up in possession of these territories. Contrary to what many are led to believe, the "West Bank," the focus of today's attention, had never been part of any Arab country. It was part of Palestine, a territorial unit that, by the Mandate of the League of Nations and in line with the Balfour Declaration, had been designated as a national home for the Jewish people.

■ Thus, while the concept of "land for peace" is a brand-new one, the concept that to the victor belong the spoils is as old as history itself and had really never been questioned before the days of the Israel-Arab conflict. Our own country, of course, following its Manifest Destiny, has benefited greatly and has consolidated its territory by applying this motto. But Israel followed a different path. From the day of victory in 1967, it waited for an offer of peace from the Arabs. But that offer never came. Instead, immediately following the war, the Arabs pronounced their three unalterable "no's:" no recognition, no negotiation, and no peace with Israel.

■ In 1977, President Sadat of Egypt traveled to Jerusalem and presented a peace plan to the Israeli government. The Israelis eagerly embraced his suggestion. In exchange for peace and normalization of relations with its neighbor, Israel returned to Egypt the vast Sinai peninsula, together with the city of Yamit; some of the most advanced military installations in the world; the port and naval installations of Sharm-el-Sheik, which safeguard Israel's access to its port of Eilat; and the oil fields that Israel had developed and which had made Israel self-sufficient in its energy requirements. And, of course, Israel also gave up the natural buffer against aggression that the Suez Canal and the strategic depth of the Sinai itself provided. It was a first in history. Never before in the chronicle of mankind had the victor returned conquered territory to the vanquished in order to attain peace.

■ One would expect that the concept of "land for peace" would work both ways. After all, should not the Arabs also make some territorial sacrifices for peace? Unfortunately, that is not the case. Every inch of land held by the Arabs is considered "holy Arab soil" and its possession by the "infidels" (Christians or Jews) is inadmissible, intolerable, a blasphemy and a case for "jihad" (holy war). No compromise, no concession is ever possible. The way the "Taba issue" was finally resolved further illustrates the Arab belief that the "land for peace" principle is basically a one-way street.

■ The "land for peace" formulation is now applied mostly to the Judea and Samaria (the "West Bank") and Gaza regions. Israel's foes, but also some of its friends, urge Israel to yield these regions to the Arabs, in exchange for "peace." But there is no peace, and no peace will come about by Israel's giving up this area of vital strategic importance to those who are its sworn enemies and who have declared over and over again that they wish to use this land as their launching pad for the final attempt at the destruction of Israel. The conflict in the area is not only between Israel and the "Palestinians." It is first of all between Israel and the Arab nations. With the single exception of Egypt, virtually all of them are still in a state of war with Israel.

To none of the Arab countries has the possibility ever occurred of *their* trading land for peace, for instance yielding the "West Bank" to Israel for the sake of peace. Not one of these countries has even hinted that they would make peace with Israel if Israel yielded the administered territories to the Arabs. There isn't even a gesture of accommodation, such as a lifting of the over 40-year-old Arab economic boycott against Israel, an apology for the odious slander that Zionism is Racism, or a discontinuation of the yearly charade in the United Nations, in which the Arab states attempt to expel Israel from that body. For the victor to yield land for peace to the vanquished is a new idea—who knows, it might even be a good one. But it surely would have to work both ways in order to be valid and effective.

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up in the existential attractions African-American men find in being "bad" and elaborated in the mythic figure of the "bad nigger."

Never mind that Katz is straying over into the realm of background causes. The point is that the background in which armed robbery becomes seductive is not simply economic; it is the milieu in which ghetto blacks constantly seek to humiliate other blacks as non-persons, in which blacks impugn one another with the phrase "nigger," in which people are always running games on each other. "The brothers—and d'sisters too—they be tryin' to keep on top, get over any way dey kin." A response to the historically prevalent "injunction not to exist as a morally competent being," being bad is a way to assert the self, to maintain "purpose in a morally challenging environment."

Katz does not always vindicate these claims in the most straightforward or gracious fashion. On a riff, mixing Husserl and wolfpacking, he can pretentiously inflate the grittiest of urban things. To describe the sadism of the badass as a kind of metaphysics wraps the criminal in a gauzy abstraction even more removed from experience than "blocked opportunity." In the process, it misses the earthier, vindictive emotions that move the hardened criminal and the psychology that explains them. With little sacrifice of the theoretical point, Katz could benefit from Williams's lack of straining to be profound or from Sullivan's careful and unflashy highlighting of mundane forces.

Notwithstanding these excesses, Katz offers some profound truths about the flight from experience, from culture, and from morality. He does so as a person of the left, bemoaning its failures: of analysis, of metaphysics, of will. As a result, denouncing an ersatz relativism that incapacitates moral judgment, Katz understands something that liberals and leftists alike have often denied: that self-determination and collective-determination are, at least in part, moral endeavors. He says it well:

> Materialist theories refuse to confront the spiritual challenge represented by contemporary crime. The profundity of the embrace of deviance in the black ghetto and the tensions that will emerge among us if we discuss the lived details of these phenomena form one set of the contemporary horrors our positivist theories help us avoid facing. Another blindness they sustain is to the lack of any intellectual or political leadership to confront the massive bloodletting of mate against mate and brother against brother that continues to be a daily reality in the inner city. •

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CORRESPONDENCE *continued from page 2*

quotes should have read, "until recently a sleazy publisher, then editor of an anti-Winchell newspaper." I regret the errors.

Understanding Nixon

To the editors:

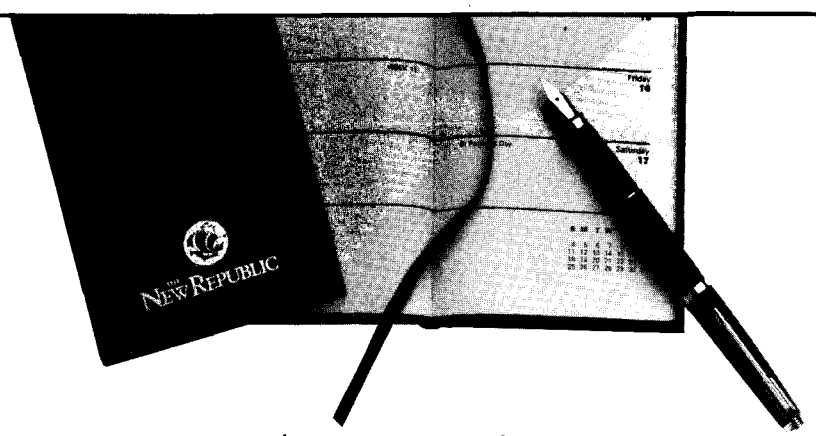
In his review of my book and several others on Richard Nixon, Alan Brinkley cannot seem to wean himself from the Nixon-as-devil-incarnate addiction ("Means of Dissent," October 1). Lord knows, the record is clear enough, and Brinkley is sufficiently astute to acknowledge that "historians will inevitably have to focus on questions that do not hinge on how one assesses Nixon's own personality."

But while allowing that I've offered an analysis that sees the man "as the product of great social and cultural forces," Brinkley finds that I share similar views with Nixon of the 1960s radicals. He reads into the text the suggestion that "Parmet implies" agreement with the administration's resort "to unusual measures in dealing with its critics." My own account of Nixon's responses, including the media-bashing, is not flattering. Understanding hardly equals approval. The "voice" is clearly Nixon's. At no point does my narrative approach what Brinkley himself notes is the intense "dislike of the student left" found elsewhere. For all his deference to the role of political atmosphere, Brinkley clearly doubts that such perspective can be achieved without exonerating the president.

The syllogism inherent in the review is simple: ". . . Nixon has spent an inordinate amount of time trying to shape or obstruct" history. He has cooperated by granting Parmet interviews and other access. Parmet is, therefore, Nixon's man among scholars. Parmet has almost overlooked Watergate, which, inferentially, must be the design of those who prefer to trivialize the scandals. Never mind that the treatment of what Nixon represented, totally ignored in the review, and the climate that produced Watergate, which permeates discussions of Nixon and the Nixon White House, precludes adding an additional section.

Finally, contrary to Brinkley's contention, Nixon had distinct views of a domestic and global order. And whatever the limitations of his character, one should not overlook the fact that a study of the times that shaped him—and the game as played by countless American politicians—is as important as emphasizing failures of personality.

HERBERT S. PARMET
New York, New York



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PAKISTAN DIARIST

Team player

EVERYBODY, IT SEEMS, IS HAVING elections, including a lot of unlikely countries that haven't had much luck with them in the past: Nicaragua, Chile, Panama, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, Russia . . . Dispatches from such places often make mention of "teams" of "international observers," who put out statements saying that the elections were "free and fair" (as in Nicaragua), or that they were neither (as in Panama), or that they fell somewhere in between (as in Romania). Last week it was Pakistan's turn, and mine.

I WENT TO PAKISTAN AS ONE OF forty members of a "team" organized by the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, known as NDI, which is loosely affiliated with the Democratic Party. Half of us were Americans (including a fair number of Republicans); the other half were from sixteen countries in the first, second, and third worlds, including Britain, Sweden, Japan, Turkey, Poland, Egypt, South Africa, and Sri Lanka. I'd often wondered what international election observers actually do. Now I know. I know what our group did, anyway. We read—great sheafs of clippings, election laws, and speech texts. We listened—to officials, party representatives, and independent journalists. And we "observed."

I OBSERVED A RALLY. THIS WAS two nights before the election, in Rawalpindi, a small city near Islamabad, Pakistan's hideous, sterile capital. It was put on by the Islamic Democratic Alliance, known as the IJI from its Urdu initials, a coalition of rightist and religious parties united by antagonism toward Benazir Bhutto and her Pakistan People's Party. The IJI has been in power since August 9, when Benazir (as she is called by friend and foe alike) was peremptorily dismissed from the prime ministership. Packed into two cars, accompanied by an armed policeman and by Husain Haqqani, a suave, young IJI spokesman, we rushed through warrens of streets, horns blaring, and were deposited at a scene of overwhelming exoticism. In a vast oblong space hemmed in by leafless trees spangled with strings of red and green lights, under a lurid, purplish pall of smoke and dust, was a human carpet—tens of thousands of people, all male, squatting on the ground, faces turned upward to a high, floodlit platform. The blare of overamplified oratory swept over everything, punctuated by the pop of fireworks and firearms—a man in the crowd, signaling his approval of the speaker, was firing a pistol into the air. Heavy banners of dark green, the IJI's color, waved slowly back and forth. So did bicycles, the IJI's symbol, mounted on poles. Here and there, sheaves of fluorescent bulbs cast a faint, eerie light against the darkness. We were taken up a ladder to the platform, which was covered with layer upon layer of red-patterned rugs, and where perhaps fifty men sat on folding chairs. Then we were taken down again, to one side—where we finally saw some women, in a roped-off section; all were fully veiled, their eyes floating in a sea of black. "Fellini crossed with David Lynch," one of my companions whispered. And a bit of Riefenstahl.

THE CADENCED SHOUTING CONtinued over the loudspeakers. Smiling languidly, Haqqani translated snatches for us. *The PPP of old once had great leaders—now it is led by an incompetent woman, who takes instructions from Washington and Moscow! Those who have sold out to India are traitors!* (The crowd chanted in response: "Traitors! Traitors!") *We are accused of supporting the armed forces of Pakistan—at least we do not support the armed forces of our enemies!* Startlingly, the speaker pronounced names that needed no translation: Salman Rushdie, Mark Siegel, Stephen Solarz. *They are friends of Israel, they are friends of India, but are they friends of Pakistan? American senators, you can keep your aid! You can keep Benazir Bhutto! You are conspiring against Islam! An Islamic resurgence is sweeping through Central Asia—it may not be good for British shopkeepers or American businessmen hungry for the Russian market, but it is good for Muslims!* It was past midnight; the rally had been going on since 4 p.m., and the main speaker, Nawaz Sharif, the probable next prime minister, had not yet arrived. We made our way back along the roiling edge of the crowd to our cars.

I OBSERVED A "NEWS" BROADcast on government-controlled Pakistani TV—in English, but identical to the Urdu version, I was told. Six minutes of speeches by the IJI's caretaker prime minister; one minute of our delegation, filmed on a visit to the Electoral Commission; four minutes of Nawaz Sharif at a rally ("We must get rid of leaders of the past who looted the public treasury," "The IJI will help the downtrodden," etc.); forty seconds of Benazir at a rally, unflatteringly filmed ("Only the PPP has roots in all four provinces"); four more minutes of government officials making political points ("The minister pointed out that the PPP has helped U.S. senators put pressure on Pakistan," etc.). In our delegation's statement a few days hence, we will say delicately that the TV coverage was "not balanced."

I OBSERVED VOTING. AT DAWN election morning, October 24, three of us set out from Lahore, a city of melancholy beauty, and in an hour's time we were in the fourteenth century. Every mile or two we encountered a village of one-story mud-brick buildings, teeming with people, cattle, and goats. At each randomly picked polling station, usually in the village school, always separate for men and women, we found idyllic scenes of civic peace. The voters lined up, clutching their identity cards. Election officials, seated behind a table, punched a corner of the cards, checked their names off a list, marked their thumbs with (supposedly) indelible ink, affixed their thumbprints to a receipt for the ballot paper. The voter would go behind a makeshift curtain, mark the paper with a rubber stamp, fold it, and drop it into a green ballot box sealed with cord and wax. Outside the polling stations, the two big parties had their "camps," tents made of colorful blankets. "No problems," was the universal reply to our questions.

THE ELECTION RETURNS SHOWED an unexpectedly overwhelming IJI victory. In Karachi two days later, after many meetings and drafting sessions, our group issued its preliminary statement and had its press conference. The statement carefully avoids the standard formula a similar NDI group had used to praise the previous Pakistani election—"free and fair"—but this subtlety was missed by the press. We say that the elections, "as we observed them at the local level," were "generally open, orderly, and well-administered." We mention irregularities, violence, the caretaker government's political use of its incumbency powers, and statistical anomalies in the voting patterns; and we stress that our report is "preliminary." I am left with a nagging feeling of unease. Perhaps our report should have mentioned that most of us had never been to Pakistan before, that we had little or no familiarity with Pakistani politics or culture, that we did not speak the language, that Pakistan is vast and our team's resources small, and that we had no way of independently verifying the vote count. If rigging was done, it was not done under our noses. I'm impressed with what we saw; and our honest initial judgment, for what it is worth, was that the results as announced more or less reflected how the people voted. But I'm even more impressed with what we did not see, what we do not know.

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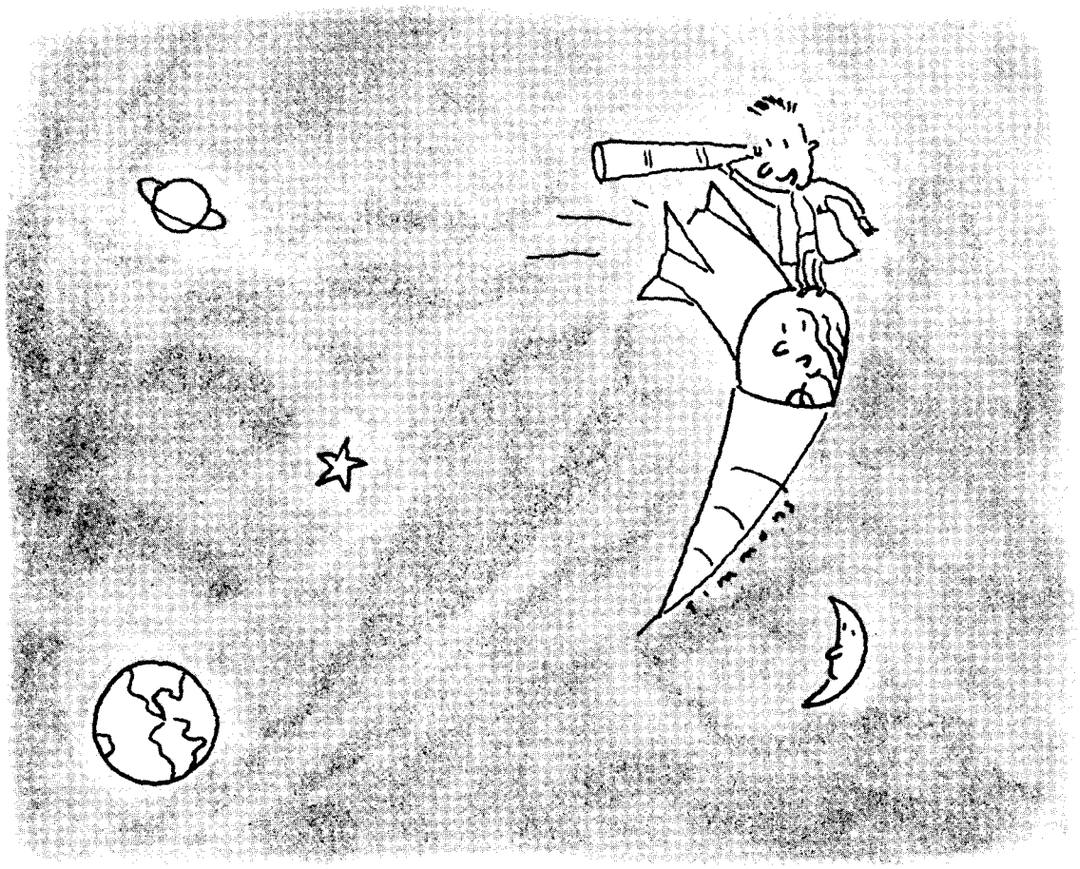

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